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THE MYSTERY OF GOD FINISHED.

GLASGOW:

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THE

MYSTERY OF GOD FINISHED;

OR, THE TIMES OF

THE RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS.

"Thus he showed me: and, behold, the Lord stood upon a wall made by a plumb-line, with a plumb-line in his hand. And the Lord said unto me, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A plumb-line. Then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumb-line in the midst of my people Israel: I will not again pass by them any more."—Amos vii. 7—8.

VOLUME I.

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INTRODUCTION.

I AM commencing a work, perhaps the most momentous in its probable results of any to which a man could apply himself in these last days; it is not however with me a matter of choice: necessity is laid upon me, and I cannot but speak the things which I have seen and heard. From the time I have felt constrained by the love of Christ, to be concerned deeply about the salvation of myself and others, I have been content to walk in a humble path of christian usefulness, wholly occupying my time in pursuits of practical christian benevolence, and studiously avoiding any connection with public controversy. The subject of the present work scarcely ever crossed my mind in a clear and intelligible form, till within the last few months: years have elapsed since I read a work upon unfulfilled prophecy; in fact, I regarded all speculation about the future of God's purpose as worse than unprofitable: I was not indisposed to regard it as bordering upon presumption. Truly God's ways are not our ways, neither are his thoughts our thoughts: left to myself, I would be the first to condemn as presumptuous the undertaking in which I have now embarked, and probably mine is the

very last mind, in which such a purpose would originate. A very peculiar training was needed before I could be disciplined into an enlightened persuasion that it was my duty to devote any of my time to the study of those scriptural predictions that are future as to the time of their accomplishment, and when at length a variety of circumstances and events forced the subject upon my attention, I shrank from a work so arduous, a responsibility so tremendous, as the execution of such a work involves.

The occasion of my thoughts being turned in this direction is not less remarkable than the results of my investigation: very early in my christian career I was brought, through a series of severe afflictions, during the time of which I was taught practically, and realized experimentally, the truth, that God is working in all things according to His own purpose, predetermined by Him before the foundation of the world, and that His care is so minute as to embrace the very numbering of the hairs of our head. This turns out to be the foundation upon which God has reared the superstructure, which, through me as the feeble instrument, will go forth as an encouragement to His people, and a warning to His adversaries, in these perilous times. My belief in God's predetermined plan of governing our world, was not theoretical or speculative,—it was thoroughly practical: just in proportion to my confidence in God in this matter, was the amount of my anxiety to know all His will concerning my duty, and the strength and constancy of my desire never to form any purpose, or follow any pursuit, contrary to His mind: such was the effect produced upon me, that I learned the habit of studying all God's dealings in providence affecting my circumstances, and thus

by a gradual process, spread over many years in its accomplishment, I was in some measure prepared for the solemn events which have recently transpired.

The frame of the interpretations of Scripture unfolded in this work, was first wrought out and disclosed to me in the events of my own life. The principal occurrences are spread over a period of 430 days: the calculations are more numerous in the personal events, than what has as yet been disclosed to me in the Scriptures, and this probably with the intention of wholly overcoming my scruples to begin a work, to which I was naturally so disinclined. My mind has again and again been awed into a solemn stillness, as view after view burst upon it, while meditating upon the wonders of the ways of Him who ruleth in heaven and in earth: carried away as it were in spirit beyond the vanities and shadows of this fleeting world, I gazed with fondness and delight, but also with profoundest reverence, upon what was shown me of the past; but when pointed to the future, when the near prospect of the glory of my great Redeemer, in the full accomplishment of a world's redemption, was set before me; when the vision of the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, was opened up unto me, and I saw at the very door, the diffusion of holiness and happiness throughout all the nations of the earth—more than once my nature gave way, unable to bear the load.

I claim for the work the prayerful consideration of all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity: it may, by the outpouring of God's Holy Spirit, prove to be to every one of the faithful, a light shining in a dark place, to which they would do well to give heed. The Spirit of God, who inspired the Prophets and Apostles when

they wrote, can alone interpret His own meaning: He is promised to every one that asks Him, so that they shall be without excuse who remain ignorant in regard to matters concerning which God, in His adorable Providence, is giving such wondrous light.

To the unconverted and worldly minded, it should convey a solemn admonition; and it is well worthy their patient perusal: where is now the promise of his coming? say they: let them read God's answer in this book, and perhaps they shall rise from its study in the experience of that joy, which the world can neither give nor take away, all old things having passed away with them, and all things having become new.

Whatever merit may belong to this work is not mine: all the honour must be ascribed to Him, whose I am, and whom I serve. I could have known nothing except it had been revealed to me from above, and to prevent any thing like a substitution of the creature for the Creator in the minds of any, I have resolved to withhold my name for a season, so that none can be tempted to give to the human instrument, that praise which is wholly due to the Almighty God. I am extremely solicitous, that God should be glorified in His well beloved Son: that glory is given him in the highest degree when sinners of mankind believe in that Son, and acknowledge Him as the sent of God: and if the eternal triumphs of the Redeemed in Heaven are swelled by the Hallelujahs of one single soul, through the instrumentality of this book, a work would be accomplished, so great as to be worthy the labour of a lifetime. It is my earnest prayer to Him who doeth according to His own will, that He may work so mightily upon the hearts of all into whose hands this book may be placed, that

they shall hear Him, when He says, "be still, and know that I am God."

The nature of this work demands simplicity but faithfulness on my part. I tremble lest I advance any thing unsupported by Scripture: I am equally concerned lest I keep back any thing that should be told. I espouse no particular ecclesiastical party. I appear not as the advocate of Episcopacy, as preferable to Independency: or of Independency, as preferable to Episcopacy: I wholly disclaim any thing so arrogant as sitting in judgment upon the principles and opinions held or practised by any man. I have but one duty to discharge: I must make known to others what has been made known to myself: let all measure it by the pattern God has given in His word, and according as it fits thereto, let what I say be received or rejected. The prevailing desire of my heart is to promote the cause of pure and undefiled religion. I am sincerely anxious that the truth should prosper: not the truth held by one denomination of Christians as opposed to the truth held by another: that would be a defeat, not a triumph in my estimation. What I hope to see accomplished is, the triumph of God's truth, the truth of the Bible, the whole truth.

I am of opinion, however, that the churches of Christ at the present day are in a position somewhat similar to the Seven Churches of Asia, whom our Lord addresses in the Book of Revelation. Every section of the church needs the word of admonition: "every founder is confounded by the graven image." No doubt some are less faulty than others: but alas! each has enough of imperfection and shortcomings to deplore in itself, to prevent its members from engaging in the unprofitable

work of declaiming against their neighbours. As far as regards our faults and blemishes, each should certainly look upon his own things, and not upon the things of others: and if individual Christians, and denominations of believers, would just remember that the surest way to make men inveterately obstinate in an error, is to expose them to ridicule or reproach on account of it, they would endeavour to follow that more excellent way of walking together so far as they are agreed, and then the influence of the godly example of one good man upon another—of each Christian denomination upon the other—would, by the blessing of God, accomplish what angry controversy and unseemly disputings have hitherto rendered impossible. Should any be so unkind to their Christian brethren, as to draw from this book any weapon wherewith to assail others, they will cause me great pain and unfeigned regret: yea, they will violate the great law of Christian love; they will, to the extent of their influence, hinder the answer to our Lord's last intercessory prayer, which embraces the visible union of all who believe in Him; and through that union the belief of the world in Him: they will abuse the mercy of that Blessed One, who, with infinite condescension, has come to prepare His people, by timely warning of those mighty events that are impending over us, and upon which hang the redemption of our world. God forbid that I should be, even unwillingly, the instrument of humbling any Christian, or society of Christians, in the sight of another: God grant rather, that all may be humbled in His sight, under His mighty hand, and that finding enough to deplore in themselves, they may have neither time nor inclination to search out the faults of others.

I know that much of what I have to say will be unpleasant to many, but to none more so than myself. I shall speak kindly; my only desire is to do good to all; and if I am obliged to point out the unscriptural character of the principles and practice of many, my feeling in doing so is one of love towards them: let such not be angry with the instrument, who is but a man like themselves. Oh! that the understandings of all may be opened, that they may understand the Scriptures. I would also desire to caution all against indulging in a boasting or vain-glorious spirit. It is not enough that we avoid censoriousness: it is obligatory upon all not to think of themselves more highly than they ought to think; let each esteem the other better than himself. The sealing of the servants of God in their foreheads, described in the 7th chap. of the Revelation, admonishes us in this respect: there was an equal number of each tribe sealed, plainly indicating that in all denominations will be found true saints; and further teaching us, that the faithful are more equally distributed among the various sections of Christ's church than men are sometimes disposed to admit. The very fact that it is so should lead all who truly love the Lord to follow those things which make for peace among the churches, rather than those things which tend to the building up of one section, which is not unfrequently, although perhaps unintentionally, done, to the injury of other sections, not less precious in the eye of the Redeemer.

May God, the God of all grace, guide and influence me wholly in this work by His Holy Spirit; that men may see in it the Hand of God; and may the Blessed Redeemer, who has all power in heaven and in earth, make a people willing in the day of His power, and pre-

pare them for beholding the glory which He is to take to Himself in these last days, by the overthrow of error, and the establishment of truth; and may He accompany this book when written, by the mighty power of His Holy Spirit, carrying conviction to every man, and "turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers, lest He come and smite the earth with a curse."

CHAPTER I.

ALL Christians entertain the belief, that the triumphs of the cross are yet to become universal; wherever the race of mankind is found, will also be witnessed the effect and power of redeeming love. The present aspect of the world, viewed apart from the Scriptures, is calculated to discourage such an expectation. Not one-fourth of its inhabitants are nominally Christians, and of the portion called Christian, by far the largest number are connected with a communion whose spirit and practice are anti-christian. This is a field of inquiry requiring for its successful prosecution the exercise of a living faith. With man, such a work as the conversion of even one soul, is impossible; with God, the conversion of the whole world is of as easy accomplishment as the conversion of a single sinner, for all things are alike possible with God; so that, when the fulness of the time comes, even the self-same day, God can and will fulfil all He hath promised. Since there is no measure by which we can exceed the range of God's ability, our simple duty is to become acquainted with His Will. Many may be disposed, in imitation of Nicodemus, to ask, "How can these things be?" The more proper course is to inquire, "Has God said it? Will He not do it? What saith the Scriptures?"

This world has been the abode of men for nearly six thousand years; it is upheld and governed by the Great Jehovah, in whose presence the seraphim stand with veiled faces, crying one to another, and saying, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory;" a God, whose love passeth all knowledge; whose wisdom and whose goodness are infinite. The natural world proclaims the wisdom and the goodness of Jehovah; the moral world bears testimony to His wondrous mercy and love; without much labour, if men are but willing to set about the inquiry, they will find innumerable traces of the Almighty and good God at every stage of the world's history. But there is one event which transcends all others, because of the resplendent glory with which it illustrates the character of God: the mission and the death of His well-beloved Son in the room of guilty sinners, gives glory to God in the highest, while it promotes peace on earth, goodwill to man; and if all this be so, will any venture to affirm, that this world has yet been restored to that perfection, happiness, and glory which its very existence, and for so long a period, warrants the expectation it will yet reach? The very perfection of God's character, above all, the wondrous spectacle witnessed on Calvary eighteen hundred years ago, teaches, in most emphatic language, that a glory awaits this world, which, in its reality, will far outstrip the sublimest imaginations of the purest christian mind.

The Scriptures overflow with predictions and promises of the latter day glory of Christ's kingdom upon earth. They would, if transcribed from the sacred page, make a volume of themselves. It is thus written, "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy pos-

session." (Psalm ii. 8.) "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him: and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts; yea, all kings shall fall down before him, all nations shall serve him." (Psalm lxxii. 8-11.) "Look unto me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." (Isaiah xlv. 22, 23.) "And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." (Isaiah lx. 3.) "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth." (Isaiah lxii. 1.) "Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer thrashing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." (Daniel ii. 34, 35, and 44.) "And the kingdom and dominion,

and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." (Daniel vii. 27. "I saw in the night-visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." (Daniel vii. 13, 14.) "But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it. For all people will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever." (Micah iv. 1–5.) "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters

cover the sea." (Habakkuk ii. 14.) "For thus saith the Lord of hosts, Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts; and in this place will I give peace saith the Lord of hosts." (Haggai ii. 6–9.) "In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts; and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein: and in that day shall there be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts." (Zech. xiv. 20, 21.) "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." (John xii. 32.) "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." (Rev. xi. 15.) "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea." (Rev. xxi. 1.)

The universal reign of Christ promised and predicted in the foregoing passages, will be ushered in by great events. Immediately preceding it, will be the conversion of the Gentile nations. "All nations shall flow into it." (Isaiah ii. 2.) "And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people: to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest

shall be glorious." (Isaiah xi. 10.) "I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." (Isaiah xlix. 6.) "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders." (Isaiah xlix. 23.) "And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." (Isaiah lx. 3.)

Prior to the full conversion of the whole Gentile world, will be the call and conversion of the Jews. "If the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles: how much more their fulness? For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in: and so all Israel shall be saved." (Rom. xi. 12, 15, 25, 26.) At the time of their conversion they shall be gathered from all quarters of the earth unto their own land. "I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you unto your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. (Ezek. xxxvi. 24—26.) "And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations

whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, and shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice, according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; that then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return, and gather thee from all nations whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee." (Deut. xxx. 1—3.) To prepare the way for their restoration, the power of the Turkish empire will be gradually diminished, until wholly dried up. "And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared." (Rev. xvi. 12.) Previous to the full conversion of the Jews, Popery and Mahomedanism will be overthrown. Both these systems of delusion will fall at the same period of time. "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." (Rev. xix. 20.) When the great city, spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, is ripe for destruction, and before the Divine wrath is poured upon it without mixture, all God's people shall be removed beyond the reach of its torments. "And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea." (Rev. xvi. 3.) "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." (Rev. xviii. 5.) "Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither."

(Gen. xviii. 22.) Immediately preceding the fall of Popery, there will be a political and social convulsion among those nations who have given their power to the Beast, and over whom the great city reigns. It will be attended with bloodshed, but shall result in the sudden conversion to God of one of the nations. "And the same hour there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven." (Rev. xi. 13.) Great Babylon will fill up the measure of its iniquities, by a violent persecution of the saints, commencing three years and a-half before its final overthrow. Satan will be actively engaged himself in this last warfare. "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." (Rev. xii. 17.) The human Antichrist will also put forth all his power in this, the last struggle. "And when they [the witnesses] shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them." (Rev. xi. 7.) Previous to this persecution, Christianity will have gained a considerable footing in one of the ten kingdoms, under the spiritual dominion of popery; and during three years and a-half, the lifeless institutions of Christianity shall be seen by all the nations, but more especially in this one kingdom. "And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, shall see their dead bodies three days and a-half, and shall not

suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves." (Rev. xi. 8, 9.) After three years and a-half, these same christian institutions shall be revived in such a way as to arrest the attention, and excite the fear of their enemies. They shall then with much glory be re-established as a portion of Christ's visible church, and shall be publicly acknowledged as such, by the other branches of Christ's kingdom. "And after three days and an half, the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them." (Rev. xi. 11, 12.) Before the time of these great events, the knowledge of the gospel shall be widely diffused throughout the world, and the motive urging men to be active in its dissemination, will be a clear and certain knowledge that the time of the end is come. "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." (Rev. xiv. 6, 7.) The certainty of the near destruction of Popery, towards the time of its end, will be such, that by the church it will be spoken of as a thing actually accomplished, before it comes to pass. "And then followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." (Rev. xiv. 8.) All men shall receive sufficient and timely warning of the peril of adhering to the systems

of error that are doomed to destruction: and they who obstinately disregard God's gracious and merciful intimations shall assuredly perish with their systems. "And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation: and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name." (Rev. xiv. 9—11.)

Before these things begin to come to pass, a very large number of the human family shall be separated from the rest of the world, and shall stand forth in a prominent position, giving glory to God in the highest, promoting peace on earth, good will to man. Men shall take knowledge of them that they have been with Christ, and they shall be to the praise and glory of His great name. They shall be redeemed from a particular place of the world; among them the temple and altar of God shall be built up, in exact accordance with the Scripture pattern; and they shall be His true worshippers. They shall pass through tribulation, but denying themselves, they shall take up their cross and follow Jesus whithersoever he goeth; and at length, separated from all that is unsound in principle and unholy in practice, being cleansed from all their idols, they shall be as first-fruits unto God and the Lamb.

A particular nation has been chosen under the New Testament economy, to which has been committed the

oracles of God; this nation occupying that position in the christian dispensation which the Jews did under the Mosaic; with this difference as to their destinies—the Jews were cast away for a season because of unbelief; whereas, the nation now chosen shall become the peculiar glory of the church in the latter days, and shall be highly honoured by God, as the people who shall propagate His Gospel throughout all the world, up till the time of the conversion of the Jews, when God's ancient people shall aid them in the glorious work. "They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities; and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation." (Deut. xxxii. 21.) "Hearken unto me, my people; and give ear unto me, O my nation: for a law shall proceed from me, and I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the people." (Isa. li. 4.) "Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings." (Isa. li. 7.) "I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name." (Isa. lxv. 2.) This chosen nation is now the house of Jacob, the people of Israel; and when the time of its great glory comes, it shall make great public professions of religion; but, notwithstanding, there shall be much and great wickedness practised in it. The cry of oppression shall be heard in it; the poor shall find no place in its sanctuary; the Sabbath will be desecrated; but times of refreshing shall come from the Lord. They shall be visited with favour from the Most High; they shall do justly and love

mercy; they shall preach the Gospel to the poor among themselves, and through its instrumentality shall moral miracles be performed. "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree; and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign which shall not be cut off." (Isaiah lv. 13.)

Towards the time of the end, the Spirit of God, as a spirit of grace and supplications, will be outpoured upon all the churches of the chosen nation, and there shall be a general mourning throughout all their land, and among all their families, when the Lord shows them all his marvellous goodness and mercy towards them for many generations past, while they were dishonouring Him. "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, and be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; all the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart." (Zechariah xii. 10—14.) There shall be earnest pleading with God for the glory of Jerusalem. "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth." (Isa. lxii. 1.) "I have set watchmen upon

thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence; and give him no rest till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." (Isa. lxii. 6, 7.) There shall be great zeal manifested by God's people at that time. "They helped every one his neighbour: and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage. So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer him that smote with the anvil, saying, It is ready for the soldering: and he fastened it with nails, that it should not be moved." (Isa. xli. 6, 7.) But as there will be much that is corrupt and unscriptural, in the alliances, principles, practice, and government of the churches, there shall be a great spiritual conflict; the powers of light and darkness, truth and error, shall wage war in the minds of individual men, and among all the churches; it shall be a troublous time, and many shall be tried. "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time." (Dan. xii. 1.) "Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried." (Dan. xii. 10.) "And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels." (Rev. xii. 7.) There will be ecclesiastical separations, and flowing from these there will be ecclesiastical unions; these again occasioning further separations, and these also preparing the way for further ecclesiastical unions; until at length the church is prepared for a general union; the Bride, the Lamb's wife, makes herself ready for the marriage of the Lamb; the Bond-woman and her children being cast

out. "But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap: and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." (Mal. iii. 2, 3.) "Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion." (Isa. lii. 8.) "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying Alleluia; for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." (Rev. xix. 6, 7.) "Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bond-woman and her son; for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac." (Gen. xxi. 10.) "But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now." (Gal. iv. 29.) This war will issue in a glorious triumph to the church of Christ; during its course, all its blots and imperfections will be removed. Satan will be cast out of the church, and have no more power within its pale, and it shall become a glorious church, the praise of God in all the earth. "And at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." (Dan. xii. 1.) "The dragon fought and prevailed not: neither was there place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And

I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our Lord, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of the brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night." (Rev. xii. 8—10.) "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?" (Song of Sol. vi. 10.) "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness leaning upon her beloved?" (Song of Sol. viii. 5.) "The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of the nations: and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God." (Isa. lii. 10.) The weapons of this great warfare are not carnal but spiritual. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Eph. vi. 12.) "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of his testimony: and they loved not their lives unto the death." (Rev. xii. 11.)

Immediately preceding all former important epochs in the history of the church, God has raised up human instruments, each of whom was endowed with special gifts and graces, suited to the circumstances in which he was to be placed, and the work God purposed to accomplish. Noah was selected from among the inhabitants of the old world, to warn men of the coming flood, a hundred and twenty years before the time appointed; and he built an ark, in which he and his family were saved alive. When the time came that God had appointed, to make a separation between the church and the world, He called Abraham, and made him the progenitor of that Seed, in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed.

When God's purpose to bring Jacob and his family down to Egypt came to be fulfilled, He brought a grievous famine upon the earth, but sent Joseph before, and by a train of marvellous providences raised him up to be the first man in Egypt, and made him the instrument of saving much people alive. When the time of the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt arrived, God, by means of Pharaoh's daughter, saved Moses alive, and at the appointed period, sent him to Pharaoh to demand their deliverance, which being obstinately refused, God, working by Moses, did with a mighty and outstretched arm take to Himself great renown, in their great deliverance, accompanied by many signs and wonders. After the death of Moses, Joshua was qualified by God, for the important work of leading and commanding the Israelites, in their conquest of the promised land. When the time came that Israel was to be established in the full possession of Palestine, David was chosen and placed upon the throne of Israel; and before the close of his reign, all the enemies of Israel were subdued. When the time of the deliverance of the Jewish Church from Babylonish captivity was fully come, God gave unto Daniel skill and understanding, and he understood by books the number of the years whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolation of Jerusalem. John the Baptist was sent as the forerunner of our Lord to prepare the way for His coming. Martin Luther was raised up, as the instrument of the Reformation accomplished in the sixteenth century: of whom, Dr. D'Aubigné, in his History of the Reformation, writes as follows:—

"All was ready. God takes ages to prepare his work, but, when the hour is come, accomplishes it by the

feeblest instruments. To do great things by small means is the law of God. This law, which appears in every department of nature, is found also in history. God took the Reformers of the church where he had taken the Apostles. He selected them from that humble class which, without containing the meanest of the people, is scarcely the length of citizenship. Every thing must manifest to the world that the work is not of man, but of God. The Reformer Zuinglius comes forth from the hut of a shepherd of the Alps. Melancthon, the theologian of the Reformation, from the workshop of an armourer; and Luther, from the cottage of a poor miner."

"The first stage in a man's life, that in which he is formed and moulded under the hand of God, is always important, and was so especially in the case of Luther —there, even at that period, the whole Reformation existed. The different phases of that great work succeeded each other in the soul of him who was the instrument of accomplishing it, before it was actually accomplished. The knowledge of the Reformation which took place in Luther's heart is the only key to the Reformation of the Church. We must study the particular work, if we would attain to a knowledge of the general work. Those who neglect the one will never know the other. They may acquire a knowledge of certain events and certain results, but the intrinsic nature of the revival they cannot know, because the living principle which formed the soul of it is hidden from them. Let us then study the Reformation in Luther, before studying it in the events which changed the face of Christendom."—(Vol. I. Book ii. p. 103, 104.)

The work that yet remains to be accomplished, as far

exceeds all that has gone before, in magnitude, magnificence, and grandeur, as the gorgeous temple does the scaffolding, framed for the purpose of its erection. All past events, however great and glorious in themselves, were but preparatory to the consummation which is yet future; and are but types and shadows of that wonderful and glorious work which God shall accomplish when He shall appear in His glory to build up Zion. Judging from God's dealings in the past, the expectation is not unreasonable, that in what yet remains to be done, He will follow out the same rule; and that at the time of the end, one or more individuals will be raised up, as in former times, endowed with the spirit of wisdom from on High, to encourage the church to its duty, and warn God's people of their danger in the last perilous times.

No new revelation need be looked for: it is unnecessary. The canon of Scripture is complete, and will not admit either of addition or diminution. "To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." (Isa. viii. 20.) The Bible is a perfect rule of faith and practice. There are, however, many parts of Scripture very obscure, and it may be God's good pleasure to make plain their meaning. In regard to prophecy, just as in the case of Daniel, it may be God's purpose to make known the time and manner of its accomplishment before it comes to pass; and such a purpose as this may be wisely ordered, so that God's people may be stirred up to a more diligent discharge of commanded duty, and His enemies silenced by the complete verification of the interpretation so vouchsafed.

This expectation is fully warranted by Scripture. "And I beheld a mighty angel come down from heaven,

clothed with a cloud; and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire." (Rev. x. 1.) This indicates the appearance of a living messenger upon the earth, to declare something hitherto dark and mysterious: his mission will be one of mercy and love: he will speak with great clearness, and the end God will accomplish by it will be pure and holy. Ver. 2; "And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot upon the earth." He will disclose in part the mystery of God's providential dealings towards His church; and the nations and people chiefly interested in what he makes known, will be those represented under the figurative terms of the earth and sea. Ver. 3; "And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices." What he says shall be heard by all interested, and the effect produced by it in the moral and spiritual world, will resemble the noise of many thunders in the natural world. Ver. 4; "And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not." What was said was so plain and intelligible, that the Apostle was commanded not to write it. Ver. 5 and 6; "And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer." What is declared will be so well attested by evidence, that it will be as sure as if confirmed by an

oath: and although the full particulars of what will be made known were sealed up, the substance of the message will be, that the end of the present state of things is at hand. Ver. 7; "But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets." When the period of time begins, which is allotted to those events represented as occurring when the seventh angel is sounding, then shall the completeness of the great mystery of God be made known as finished: and this the prophets have foretold. "And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up: and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. And he said unto me, Thou must prophecy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings." (Verses 8—11.) It is here indicated, that as John the Baptist came in the spirit of Elijah the prophet before our Lord, so another in the spirit of John should, by a peculiar training for so solemn a work, be prepared for making known in the fulness of the time what should till then be sealed up. (Chap. xi. ver. 1;) "And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein." John did not measure any of these things, so that he

may be still regarded as representing one, in his spirit, who should be raised up, and to whom would be given the means of showing to the world the exactness, order, and harmony of the Divine procedure towards His church. Ver. 2; "But the court which is without the temple, leave out, and measure it not: for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months." The events occurring among those nations under the dominion of the beast, were not to be measured; although it was yet destined to be the holy city, that part of the earth was to hold the same relation to the land, where the true church was established, that the outer court did to the Jewish temple. It is thus written, Zechariah ii. 1, 2; "I lifted up mine eyes again, and looked, and behold a man with a measuring line in his hand. Then said I, Whither goest thou? And he said unto me, To measure Jerusalem, to see what is the breadth thereof, and what is the length thereof." It is also written, Daniel xii. 8, 9, and 13; "And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. But go thou thy way till the end be; for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." It is also written in Ezekiel xl. 2—5; "In the visions of God brought he me into the land of Israel, and set me upon a very high mountain, by which was as the frame of a city in the south. And he brought me thither, and, behold, there was a man, whose appearance was like the appearance of brass, with a line of flax in his hand, and a measuring reed: and he stood in the gate. And the man said unto me, Son of man, behold with

thine eyes, and hear with thine ears, and set thine heart upon all that I shall show thee; for to the intent that I might show them unto thee art thou brought hither: declare all that thou seest to the house of Israel. And behold a wall on the outside of the house round about, and in the man's hand a measuring reed of six cubits long, by the cubit and an hand-breadth: so he measured the breadth of the building, one reed; and the height one reed." The message sent, the light given, will be communicated to the world in a written form. "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard it: and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels: and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." (Malachi iii. 16, 17.) Many shall then seek after God: the right and the wrong of the principles by which the conduct of men is regulated will be made so clear that all may discern between them. "Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth Him not." (Malachi iii. 18.)

CHAPTER II.

"God hath made the world and all things therein. He giveth to all life, breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us; for in him we live, and move, and have our being." (Acts xvii. 24—27.) God's scheme of providence, which is strictly subservient to His scheme of grace, for the redemption of this world, is divided into three sections or chambers, each embracing a period of two thousand years. The first section begins with the fall of man, and concludes with the death of Noah. Midway between these two events, "Enoch walked with God, and was not, for God took him." (Gen. v. 24.) Immediately after the fall, when moral darkness was upon the face of the deep, God said, Let there be light, and there was light; for He said unto the serpent, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." (Gen. iii. 15.) God also divided the light from the darkness. When wicked Cain, instigated by Satan, slew his righteous brother Abel, God raised

up Seth, among whose descendants He preserved the light, and they began to call upon the name of the Lord. This period terminates with the translation of Enoch, after he had prophesied of the last days, saying, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." (Jude 14, 15.)

The second period begins with the birth of Noah, during which the sons of God corrupted themselves by ungodly marriages with the daughters of men, and the earth was filled with violence. God then made a moral firmament, causing a wide separation between the ungodly and the godly, showing His abhorrence of the one, and His care of the other. God chose Noah and his family as His church; and as a figure of the great and final redemption through Jesus Christ, they were saved alive in the ark when the world of ungodly men was destroyed by a flood of water. "In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened." (Gen. vii. 11.) This period terminates with the death of Noah.

The second section commences with the birth of Abraham, and terminates with the birth of Christ. Midway, or in the three thousandth year of the world's history, Solomon completes the building of the temple at Jerusalem. The period had now come in which God had purposed to make a still more marked separation between his church and the world. "Now the Lord

said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken unto him." (Gen. xii. 1—4.) God thus gathered together the waters unto one place, and the dry land appeared. The nation descending from Abraham being the earth, and all other nations the sea. To the Israelites pertain the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises. (Rom. ix. 4.) God thus saying, during this period, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself upon the earth: and it was so." (Gen. i. 11.)

God called Abraham 1921 years before Christ, and appeared to him on several subsequent occasions, and confirmed the promise originally made him. "The Lord appeared unto Abraham in the plains of Mamre, (1897 years before Christ,) and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day. And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous, I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me: and if not, I will know." (Gen. xviii. 1, 20, 21.) "Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven: and he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and

that which grew upon the ground." (Gen. xix. 24, 25.)

1896 years before Christ. "The Lord visited Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did unto Sarah as he had spoken. For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him." (Gen. xxi. 1, 2.) Some time previously, "Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the Lord hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid: it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. And Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar her maid, the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife. And Hagar bare Abram a son: and Abram called his son's name, which Hagar bare, Ishmael." (Gen. xvi. 2, 3, 15.)

This improper connection and its fruit, were the cause of great trouble and sorrow in Abraham's household: at length, 1894 years before Christ, "Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking; wherefore she said unto Abraham, cast out this bond-woman and her son: for the son of this bond-woman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac. And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son. And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of the bond-woman: in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice: for in Isaac shall thy seed be called. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and sent her away." (Gen. xxi. 9—12, 14.)

"And it came to pass, (1863 years before Christ,)

that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham. And he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt-offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. And they (Abraham and Isaac) came to the place which God had told him of: and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: And he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me." (Gen. xxii. 1, 2; xxxiv. 9—12.)

"So Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs. And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him, and delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt, and all his house. Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction: and our fathers found no

sustenance. But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first. And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren; and Joseph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh. Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls. So Jacob went down into Egypt." 1706 years before Christ. (Acts vii. 8—15.)

"But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt, till another king arose, which knew not Joseph. The same dealt subtilely with our kindred, and evil-entreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end that they might not live. In which time (1571 years before Christ,) Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months: and when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son. And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds. And when he was full forty years old, (1531 years before Christ,) it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian: for he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them; but they understood not. And the next day he showed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another? But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us? Wilt thou kill me, as thou didest the Egyptian yesterday? Then fled Moses

at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Madian, where he begat two sons." (Acts vii. 17—29.)

1491 years before Christ. "And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sina, an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush. When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the Lord came unto him, saying, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold. Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground. I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt. This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer, by the hand of the Angel which appeared to him in the bush. He brought them out, after that he had showed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness forty years." (Acts vii. 30—36.)

"Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass, at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the self-same day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt." (Ex. xii. 40, 41.)

1450 years before Christ. Joshua succeeds Moses, and, encouraged by God, sends spies to Jericho. The Israelites pass the river Jordan in a miraculous manner, and commence the conquest of the land of promise, and take Jericho.

1434 years before Christ. Joshua dies, after having divided the land by lot among the Israelites, and from this year may date their settlement in Palestine.

1095 years before Christ. The Israelites, wearied of God's deputy judges, request a king to render them like the neighbouring nations, when Saul is made king. 1055 years before Christ: David is raised to the throne of Israel, during whose reign the kingdom of Israel was extended by his conquests to its greatest limits. This was accomplished 1020 years before Christ, when in four successive battles, the armies of Israel defeated the Philistines.

After the death of David, Solomon ascended the throne of Israel, 1015 years before Christ. Four years after, he commences the building of the Temple at Jerusalem, which was completed 1004 years before Christ, or the three thousandth year of the world, being the event which closes the third period.

The fourth period commences with the dedication of the Temple, and ends with the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. During this period, God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven, to divide the day from the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and for years. And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven, to give light upon the earth, and it was so. And God made the great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also." (Gen. i. 14—16.) God fully completed all the details of the Jewish church, which, like the moon, shone with a borrowed light upon a dark and benighted world. He also raised up a succession of prophets, who, being filled with the Holy Ghost, shone like stars in the spiritual firmament;

until at length "the Sun of Righteousness arose with healing in his wings." (Malachi iv. 2.)

991 years before Christ. Solomon finishes the building of his magnificent palace; and 975 years before Christ, he is succeeded on the throne by his son, Rehoboam. 606 years before Christ, Nebuchadnezzar, the Chaldean, invades Judea; renders Jehoiakim his tributary; carries off Daniel, his companions, and others to Babylon, with part of the vessels of the temple of God, which he places in that of Belus. 590 years before Christ: "It came to pass, in the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon came, he, and all his host, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it; and they built forts against it round about: and the city was besieged until the eleventh year of king Zedekiah." (2 Kings xxv. 1, 2.)

536 years before Christ. "Now, in the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, (that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled,) the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth: and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah: who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem. And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, besides the freewill-offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem. Then rose up

the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites, with all them whose spirit God had raised, to go up to build the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem." (Ezra i. 1-5.)

520 years before Christ. "Then the prophets, Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied unto the Jews that were in Judah and Jerusalem, in the name of the God of Israel, even unto them. Then rose up Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and began to build the house of God which is at Jerusalem: and with them were the prophets of God helping them." (Ezra v. 1, 2.)

"And the elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo: and they builded, and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia. And this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king. And the children of Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the rest of the children of the captivity, kept the dedication of the house of God with joy." 515 years before Christ. (Ezra vi. 14—16.)

457 years before Christ, Artaxerxes issues an edict in favour of the Jews. "Ezra, (and a large company with him,) goes up from Babylon, on the first day of the first month; and on the first day of the fifth month came he to Jerusalem, according to the good hand of his God upon him." (Ezra vii. 9.) "Then all the men of Judah and Benjamin gathered themselves together unto Jerusalem within three days: it was the ninth month, and the twentieth day of the month; and all the people sat in

the street of the house of God, trembling because of this matter, and for the great rain. And Ezra the priest stood up, and said unto them, Ye have transgressed, and have taken strange wives, to increase the trespass of Israel. Now therefore make confession unto the Lord God of your fathers, and do his pleasure; and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives. Then all the congregation answered and said with a loud voice, As thou hast said, so must we do." (Ezra x. 9—12.)

445 years before Christ. "The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. And it came to pass in the month Chisleu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace, that Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach; the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burnt with fire." (Neh. i. 1—3.) "Then I came to the governors beyond the river, and gave them the king's letters. When Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, heard of it, it grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel. So I came to Jerusalem, and was there three days." (Neh. ii. 9—11.) "And the rulers knew not whither I went, or what I did; neither had I as yet told it to the Jews, nor to the priests, nor to the nobles, nor to the rulers, nor to the rest that did the work. Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and

let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach. Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work. But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard it, they laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What is this thing that ye do? will ye rebel against the king? Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial in Jerusalem." (Neh. ii. 16—20.) "So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty and two days. And it came to pass, that when all our enemies heard thereof, and all the heathen that were about us saw these things, they were much cast down in their own eyes: for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God." (Neh. vi. 15, 16.)

433 years before Christ. "And before this, Eliashib the priest, having the oversight of the chamber of the house of our God, was allied unto Tobiah: and he had prepared for him a great chamber, where aforetime they laid the meat-offerings, the frankincense, and the vessels, and the tithes of the corn, the new wine, and the oil, (which was commanded to be given to the Levites, and the singers, and the porters,) and the offerings of the priests. But in all this time was not I at Jerusalem: for in the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes, king of Babylon, came I unto the king, and after certain days obtained I leave of the king: and I came to Jerusalem, and understood of the evil that Eliashib did for Tobiah,

in preparing him a chamber in the courts of the house of God. And it grieved me sore; therefore I cast forth all the household stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber. Then I commanded, and they cleansed the chambers; and thither brought I again the vessels of the house of God, with the meat-offering and the frankincense." (Neh. xiii. 4—9.) "Then contended I with the rulers, and said, Why is the house of God forsaken? And I gathered them together, and set them in their place. Then brought all Judah the tithe of the corn, and the new wine, and the oil into the treasuries." (Neh. xiii. 11, 12.) "In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath-day; and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals. There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath-day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel, by profaning the sabbath. And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath; and some of my servants set I at the gates, that there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath-day. So the merchants, and sellers of all kind of ware, lodged without Jerusalem once or twice. Then I testified against them, and said

unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall? if ye do so again, I will lay hands on you. From that time forth came they no more on the sabbath. And I commanded the Levites, that they should cleanse themselves, and that they should come and keep the gates, to sanctify the sabbath-day." (Neh. xiii. 15—22.) This, the fourth period in the history of the church and the world, terminates with the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the four thousandth year of the world.

CHAPTER III.

SHORTLY after the birth of our Lord, "the angel of the Lord appeareth unto Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word; for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt; and was there until the death of Herod; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my Son." (Math. ii. 13—15.) "Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men." (Matt. ii. 16.) It would appear that this event occurred more than a year after Christ's birth. "But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life. And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel." (Matt. ii. 19—21.) Herod's death occurred three years

after Christ's birth, so that from our Saviour's birth until his return from Egypt to the land of Israel, is probably three years and a-half. From this event it would appear, that God, in his providential arrangements, has caused the Christian era to be dated.

"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. iii. 1, 2.) This appears to have occurred twenty-seven years after the birth of Christ. "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. iv. 17.) Jesus being then thirty years on the earth. In the thirtieth year of the christian era, and when our Lord had been upon the earth thirty-three years and a-half: "Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of Man should be glorified. Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. Then the band, and the captain, and officers of the Jews, took Jesus, and bound him, and led him away to Annas first. Now Annas had sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest. Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas to the hall of judgment. He (Pilate) brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment-seat, in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your king! But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your king? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Cesar. Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took

Jesus and led him away. And he, bearing his cross, went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew, Golgotha; where they crucified him, and two others with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst. And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin. After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost." (John xii. 23, 27, 32; xviii. 12, 13, 24, 28; xix. 13—20, 28—30.) "Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly: not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God." (Acts x. 40, 41.) "Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. xxviii. 16—20.)

The fifth period in the history of the church, is distinguished as that in which the christian dispensation was introduced; the gospel efficaciously preached unto

the Jews first, but also to the Gentiles: and more particularly, as the period in which Jacob's vision was realized: "when he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it." (Gen. xxviii. 12.) The ascent of the gracious Redeemer from the earth, to his throne in the heavens, was followed by the descent of the Holy Spirit, the third person in the blessed Trinity, by whose influences a more close and intimate relationship has been established, between man upon earth, and God and angels in heaven. "God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven." (Gen. i. 20.) Spiritual life was imparted to many among the nations and kindreds of the earth, and men's thoughts began to rise above the earth, and settle upon those things which are in the heavens.

Then "appeared that great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars;" (Rev. xii. 1;) indicating the great glory of the gospel, as compared with the Jewish dispensation: the one being represented under the figure of a woman clothed with the sun, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: the other being represented under the figure of the moon. Thus teaching that the christian dispensation had superseded the Jewish; but also showing, that the one was founded upon the other: the moon was under the woman, but her feet rested upon it.

The inspired history of the Church closes with the Acts of the Apostles: very great dependence cannot be placed upon the events recorded, and the time of their

occurrence, for some centuries after the closing of the canon of Scripture. The transition state of the gospel church—its continued exposure at short intervals to violent persecutions, may account, so far as man is concerned, for the meagerness and uncertainty of the records transmitted to us. But even from the period that church history begins to be indisputably accurate as to events and dates, the causes to which effects are traced vary, in general, according to the extent in which the mind of the historian is biassed towards a particular section of the church. The prosecution of the present work would have been comparatively less difficult, if an inspired history of the New Testament church had been handed down, similar to that which the Old Testament contains of the Jewish church. But in this is manifested the wisdom of God. Church history supplies that which man could do, a correct and faithful record of events and the times of their occurrence. That which man uninspired could not do, God has furnished, by revealing in the Scriptures the principles which regulate His moral government; but chiefly, and more certainly, by the light which prophecy, correctly interpreted, casts upon the events recorded in history.

God must be acknowledged in all history, sacred or profane: for whether men believe it or reject it, the truth is not the less certain, that God is the origin and the end of all things, sin excepted. History, written in such a way as only partially and indirectly to recognize the Divine Being in great and startling events, is faulty. But history, from the pages of which all recognition of God is studiously excluded; the prevailing spirit of the style and sentiment of which would seem to indicate a distaste of what is sacred; sometimes, no doubt uninten-

tionally, expressed in language so incautious as to manifest a contempt of all religious feeling, and at other times, amounting almost to an avowal of disbelief in the very existence of the great Jehovah Himself;—history so written, may store the minds of those who study it with correct information as to events and times, but its moral tendency is unquestionably most injurious.

It has been much regretted by godly and pious men that some of our best modern historians have been influenced by principles hostile to Christianity, and bordering upon infidelity. It has appeared a mysterious dispensation of Divine Providence, that the peculiar talent and ability needful for the prosecution of such work have been most largely bestowed upon men, who proved themselves unwilling to honour God with His own gift. But as in every thing which God does, so in this, the time will come, when by these very writings, as yet apparently so hurtful to true religion, God will honour himself in the eyes of all men, and make them the very praise of His great and glorious name.

There are great principles which every student of history should lay down for his guidance in all his researches, and by which he should regulate his conclusions. The events recorded in the history of the church and the world, are not the product of blind chance or inexorable fate. The crises and epochs in the history of particular nations, and of the world at large, have not come unexpected and unprovided for. The laws which regulate the events of Providence, are not less fixed and certain, than the laws which regulate the movements of the planets; and the exactness and harmony of God's movements in times past, in the moral world, may be calculated in the time, and in the order of their occur-

rence, with as much certainty, as astronomers can now assure us of His movements in the starry firmament. All past events have been produced by moral and intelligent agents, God Himself presiding as the Sovereign Lord and Ruler of all.

At the very threshold of our inquiry into the relation which parties occupy toward each other, and toward the events that occur, a very important question presents itself: What position does God occupy? I am confident, that if men would come to the consideration of this all-important matter, with a sincere desire to be guided in the way of truth, they would find many of its assumed, and I must say, pretended difficulties, wholly and speedily removed. The revelation which God has been pleased to give concerning Himself in this matter, is clear, explicit, and most decided. Throughout all Scripture, in the law, in the prophets, and by the apostles, there is one uniform and consistent testimony borne upon this point; and if the belief of this particular truth is beset with difficulty, it must arise from man's unwillingness to receive it, and not from any defect in the testimony by which it is supported. God's unlimited, uncontrolled, and universal sovereignty, is taught with great clearness in the Scriptures: "he may read that runs." The mystery of God's purpose, known to Himself before the foundation of the world, has been gradually unfolded by Him in the ages that are past; is still developing, and will so continue, until "in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him." (Eph. i. 10.) Amid all the complications of His incomprehensible purpose regarding our earth, not one event has happened, or can yet come to pass,

which it does not embrace; and all determined by Him shall most assuredly be brought about, and that precisely at the time, and in the manner, He has been pleased to appoint. "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me; declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it." (Isa. xlvi. 9—11.) "And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" (Dan. iv. 35.) After predicting the destruction of Jerusalem, and His second coming, Jesus spake thus: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." (Luke xxi. 33.) "God, that made the world, and all things therein, and hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation." (Acts xvii. 24, 26.)

God has been pleased, with infinite condescension, to reveal in His word the holy and gracious principles by which He hath seen meet, for His own glory, to regulate the exercise of His Sovereignty. This earth and its inhabitants are under the care and government of a Being, the excellency of whose goodness passeth all knowledge; whose purpose is one of infinite mercy and love; all whose ways proclaim His glory, while they promote the true happiness and best interests of all under

His widely extended dominion. "And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him (Moses) there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation." (Exod. xxxiv. 5—7.)

Implicit confidence in the revelation God has given of Himself in His word is indispensable, if we would endeavour to trace the hand of God in history; and without such a knowledge of Him, His dealings in Providence will not come before the mind clothed with that grandeur and majesty, which are traceable in all His ways to the children of men; but the prayerful, believing, and diligent student of them, with such knowledge, will not be a stranger to the ecstatic wonder and amazement of the great apostle of the Gentiles, who, in winding up such a meditation, exclaimed, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? or who hath given first to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." (Rom. xi. 33—36.)

There are also created intelligences concerned in, and connected with, the events transacting on this earth. So far as known to us, there are two orders of them—angels and men. There are holy angels and fallen angels.

The holy angels, remaining steadfast in their allegiance to their God, stand in His presence, and are swift to do His will. The fallen angels, cast from their high estate because of sin, are in a state of open rebellion against their Creator and their God, and acknowledge as their leader and commander, Satan, the arch-enemy of God and man. There are renewed men and wicked men. Those renewed by the Spirit of God being in course of preparation for the high and holy service of the Lord in another world, while they are occupied on earth fighting the good fight of faith, contending with the remaining corruption in their own nature, the wickedness of the world, and the wiles of the devil. Wicked men, under the control of Satan and his angels; regarding not God either in their thoughts or ways; and, under the influence of evil passions, practising all manner of wickedness, to their own utter ruin and misery. These, as two hostile armies, stand opposed the one to the other. Light and darkness, truth and error, oppression and freedom, sin and holiness, are perpetually waging war; and to these influences, in operation upon the theatre of this earth, must be traced, under the overruling power of God, all those occurrences which make up the sum of our world's history for nearly six thousand years. Satan's success in seducing our first parents, introduced sin and its consequent miseries. God's determination to rescue our world and redeem mankind, re-introduced the elements of holiness and truth—light and freedom—among our fallen race; and these, through the agency of God's Holy Spirit upon converted men, have occasioned a perpetual moral conflict with Satan, the world, and the flesh, which shall not cease, until Satan's usurped power is wrested from him by the stronger than he, even the

Lord Jesus; and the nations of earth, emancipated from his cruel and degrading thraldom, be made to acknowledge that the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.

Man's relation to all that is happening is that of a free and responsible agent, accountable to God for every part of his conduct, and yet to be judged according to his works. Here again, men are sometimes inclined to interpose needless difficulties. What could not be known of God except by express revelation, man may know concerning himself by experience. Where is the man, whether converted or unconverted, that can point to a single act of his life, which, in so far as the Supreme Being was concerned, he was not left free to choose what he would, or would not do? Yea, even in conversion and sanctification, in both of which God alone can effectually work in and by man: yet so great is the mystery of godliness, that no saint on earth or in heaven can single out an instance in which, God, by compulsion, extorted from him an act of obedience and duty opposed to his present will. On the contrary, the very essence of all true religion, in the sight of God, is the cheerfulness and willingness with which all enjoined duty is performed. Even with the wicked and froward, God deals as with moral and responsible agents. He does not so proceed as to terrify the ungodly into an unwilling conformity: but He persuades, entreats, remonstrates, and warns. "God is a spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John iv. 24.) Would that men would endeavour to follow God's own perfect example, and in their dealings with each other, whether as rulers or ruled, leave that free, which God has seen meet in His manifold wisdom to leave free. Man has unwisely dared, in matters of reli-

gion, to attempt that which God has decreed can never be accomplished. Let those who strive by secular means to bind men's consciences with the cords of external uniformity in the concern of religion, consider, that they are trenching upon that in man which God wills to be free: and while penal laws in former times, and the fear of contemptuous treatment in present times, may make many hypocritical conformists; it never has been, and never will be, in the power of men, be they popes, or kings, or parliaments, by any such procedure, to make even one true convert to the Christian faith. "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." (Isa. xlv. 22.)

If men are to attain a more perfect knowledge of the great mystery, in process of development through their instrumentality upon this earth, they must humbly, but with fear and trembling, ascend somewhat higher towards the inaccessible heights of the Divine purpose; and they must dip somewhat deeper, the accessible depths of the workings of the human mind. The ascent upwards to God must be made, neither with the boldness of the critic, nor the speculativeness of the theorist. They who enter upon such an inquiry, must remember that they tread upon holy ground; that they travel by a way which when seraphs enter, they pause to worship at the threshold: and, as the brightening glory of the scene in their march forward, fans into a greater flame the fervour of their devotion, their pure spirits becoming enraptured, and unable longer to gaze upon those wonders which "eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man to conceive," they veil their faces with their wings, and crying one to

another, thus give utterance to their astonishment and reverence :—"Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." Such ascending to the highest of all subjects of meditation is not forbidden even to man, if his only motive in prosecuting such an inquiry is to glorify God, and promote the enlightenment and improvement of men. They who approach this subject with such desires have no reason to apprehend the frown of God; they may rather cherish the assured confidence, that the more earnest and sincere their anxiety thus to honour Jehovah, the more abundant will be the outpouring of His Holy Spirit to guide them in the way of all truth: for "if any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not: and it shall be given him." (James i. 5.)

The history of this world, written by divine inspiration, would be a history of order, regularity, and mathematical exactness; and not, as frequently presented to the mind when wandering through the mazes of man's records, a mass of moral confusion. The mighty rivers which flow through the continents of the earth in their course onwards to the sea, cannot be more certainly traced up to their sources—the rippling streams wending their way down the lofty mountains—than the great streams of human life and action can be traced to their sources, in the thoughts, the feelings, the desires, and purposes of men: all at work, but all in mysterious subserviency to the great purpose of Him who rules over all. Just as the rivers are confined to their particular limits in their course, and the lines marked out along which flow the tributary streams, until they reach the point of junction with the great current of water,

so are the times and the seasons, and the course of all human events appointed and regulated. All the while the waters ceaselessly flow, unconscious of the law, obedience to which they are rendering: so mankind, with a light to guide unerringly, in all matters of present duty, flow down the stream of human events, unconscious of the particular point which they occupy, and the special ends which they are accomplishing in the complex scheme of Divine Providence.

Such views of man's probationary state should awaken in the human mind the most exalted and ennobling conceptions of God; and they should overawe every man with a deep sense of his tremendous responsibility. Individuals of the human family have been placed in circumstances so fraught with solemn consequences, that the conflicts passing in their minds, have, in their results, affected the destinies of millions of their fellow-beings yet unborn. This is not the place to digress into an essay upon the influence which mind in union with matter, as in the person of man, does exercise upon others of his species. Enough is known in these days of great discovery, to prove that man can, by summoning to his aid the electric fluid, communicate his thoughts to the most distant regions of the earth with the swiftness of lightning. May there not then be, unknown to us, a process of influence in operation throughout all the world of spirits, not excluding man, a system of intercommunication so complete and perfect, that every thought of every heart, as well as the public act of individual life, have their direct and particular bearing upon the destinies of the world at large, and the effects of which eternity alone can unfold.

No man, however far removed from public observation

in his sphere of action, is so obscure as to have no place assigned him in the comprehensive purpose of God. The new born babe, which may scarcely have breathed after its entrance into this world before departing to another, even it, in its short career, has contributed its share of influence in completing the links in the chain of Providence. The rich, the great, and the noble, need not despise the poorest in the land. God is no respecter of persons. The only distinction which he will recognise is distinction in character. He will distinguish only between those who serve Him, and those who serve Him not. A wondrous sympathy runs throughout the social system; there is a close connection between the sighs, the groans, the hardships, and sorrows of the suffering and neglected poor in a community, and the thorns which strew the path of those, whose duty it is personally to acquaint themselves with their cases, and minister to their wants. There is a law of righteous retribution steadily at work in the Providence of God, which, without any miraculous interpositions, confronts its transgressors, and inflicts upon them the merited penalty. The teachings of providence plainly intimate that every man is his brother's keeper; and that is a wise and beneficent arrangement which makes the well-being of a whole community dependant upon the well-being of its individual members. Some events take several generations to ripen; others come to maturity in a similar number of years. In every case the general event comprises the workings of multitudes of individual minds; and in the course of these workings, each individual mind has its allotted portion as complete and perfect in itself, as if isolated from all the rest.

That was a period of this world's history pregnant

the Jews first, but also to the Gentiles: and more particularly, as the period in which Jacob's vision was realized: "when he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it." (Gen. xxviii. 12.) The ascent of the gracious Redeemer from the earth, to his throne in the heavens, was followed by the descent of the Holy Spirit, the third person in the blessed Trinity, by whose influences a more close and intimate relationship has been established, between man upon earth, and God and angels in heaven. "God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven." (Gen. i. 20.) Spiritual life was imparted to many among the nations and kindreds of the earth, and men's thoughts began to rise above the earth, and settle upon those things which are in the heavens.

Then "appeared that great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars;" (Rev. xii. 1;) indicating the great glory of the gospel, as compared with the Jewish dispensation: the one being represented under the figure of a woman clothed with the sun, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: the other being represented under the figure of the moon. Thus teaching that the christian dispensation had superseded the Jewish; but also showing, that the one was founded upon the other: the moon was under the woman, but her feet rested upon it.

The inspired history of the Church closes with the Acts of the Apostles: very great dependence cannot be placed upon the events recorded, and the time of their

occurrence, for some centuries after the closing of the canon of Scripture. The transition state of the gospel church—its continued exposure at short intervals to violent persecutions, may account, so far as man is concerned, for the meagerness and uncertainty of the records transmitted to us. But even from the period that church history begins to be indisputably accurate as to events and dates, the causes to which effects are traced vary, in general, according to the extent in which the mind of the historian is biassed towards a particular section of the church. The prosecution of the present work would have been comparatively less difficult, if an inspired history of the New Testament church had been handed down, similar to that which the Old Testament contains of the Jewish church. But in this is manifested the wisdom of God. Church history supplies that which man could do, a correct and faithful record of events and the times of their occurrence. That which man uninspired could not do, God has furnished, by revealing in the Scriptures the principles which regulate His moral government; but chiefly, and more certainly, by the light which prophecy, correctly interpreted, casts upon the events recorded in history.

God must be acknowledged in all history, sacred or profane: for whether men believe it or reject it, the truth is not the less certain, that God is the origin and the end of all things, sin excepted. History, written in such a way as only partially and indirectly to recognize the Divine Being in great and startling events, is faulty. But history, from the pages of which all recognition of God is studiously excluded; the prevailing spirit of the style and sentiment of which would seem to indicate a distaste of what is sacred; sometimes, no doubt uninten-

seat of Satan's usurped power is the depraved heart of man. The human heart, with its various sympathies, affections, and desires, is the scene of conflict, in which Satan first obtained a place by falsehood, and from which God expels him by truth. Satan led man's spirit captive by tempting him to sin. God makes him free by the restoration of righteousness. The history of the world evinces design on the part of God: it also discloses design on the part of Satan. History must be viewed in two distinct aspects, social and religious. The one is termed God's scheme of providence, the other His scheme of grace. They will perhaps be better understood by the terms commonly in use at the present day, the State and the Church.

In both branches may be traced the workings of Satan, and the counter-workings of God's omnipotence. The outlines of the Divine plan appear with considerable clearness in the events of history. Neither is Satan's plan of opposition entirely concealed from view. Satan's chief strength seems to consist in concentration, which God effectually meets by a purpose of diffusion. Satan's great aim can scarcely be mistaken, for in every state of human society, whether civilised or barbarian, and at every new phase evolved, he has, with a marked uniformity, struggled to place the greatest possible number of mankind under the absolute sway of one earthly potentate, through whom, so long as God's purpose permitted, he, with comparative ease, exercised his usurped and cruel sovereignty over successive generations of men. God has as invariably overthrown, when at the zenith of their power, these wide-spread systems of oppression and tyranny; and although they now exist in a much more modified form, (for Satan always accommodates himself to

the exigencies of the times,) still their doom is written in the history of the past, as well as in the scriptural predictions of the future. In selecting this plan of opposition to Jehovah, Satan has proved himself to possess a master mind. He knew he was contending with an omnipresent and omniscient God, while he himself was a finite being; and it would appear that his idea of concentration originated in the bold purpose, of thus if possible, placing himself in a position to contend successfully with that Glorious and Holy One, who at one and the same moment is present throughout all the universe, displaying the perfection of His attributes to the utmost bounds of creation. His whole works combined, and every minute atom thereof apart, proclaiming with an equal clearness and fulness, the continual presence of their great Creator and Upholder.

The historical parts of Scripture almost exclusively relate to God's chosen people. After the call of Abraham, any reference to other nations of men is because of their connection with the history of the Jewish nation. The scripture history of the world, from the time of the flood to the call of Abraham, is contained in two chapters of Genesis; and these for the most part genealogical. There is, however, one important event narrated somewhat in detail, and it is a remarkable illustration of the two contending principles at work in the world. "And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city, and a tower

whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of. the whole earth." (Gen. xi. 1—4.) Here we have an inspired account of Satan's attempt to lay the foundation of one universal government, through which to rule the whole race of men, and if possible, oppose the purpose of God. "And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of the whole earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth." (Gen. xi. 5—9.) God here records the overthrow of Satan's attempt; and He has been graciously pleased to record at the same time, His reason for so doing.

The history of the successive empires that have, during their existence, swayed the earthly destinies of men, is one continued exemplification of this great but unequal contest between God and Satan; its course, from the origin of the first of these empires, down to the overthrow of the last of them, in its last form of oppression and tyranny, was made known to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, in a dream; and when forgotten by him, was again revealed to Daniel, accompanied with its interpretation, and is recorded in the

2d chapter of Daniel, from the 31st to the 45th verses.

In matters of religion, as in matters of state, the same opposing purposes and powers have hitherto been contending; Satan following out one plan, and God defeating it by the adoption of another. Satan has many devices, and he has been unscrupulous in the use of expedients in his warfare with God in the church. His chief, his leading aim, that which most invariably gave him a temporary success, was his uniting the church with the world; as often as he accomplished this, the great line of demarcation between the godly and ungodly was obliterated; and the salt having lost its savour, wherewith could it be salted. To this very cause is ascribed in Scripture, that great wickedness of man, which filled the earth with violence in the days of Noah, when God destroyed the ungodly with a flood of water. "It came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose." (Gen. vi. 1, 2.)

The separation of the church from the world during the times of the regeneration, is the manifest and declared purpose of God. It is His will that the godly come out and be separate, that they may shine as lights in the world. By this means God has always preserved a seed to serve Him; and although they have generally been few in number, yet by them, as witnesses, a testimony for God, and against Satan, has been maintained in the earth, throughout all generations. God's purpose is revealed in the call of Abraham, and the separating of him and his descendants from the rest

of mankind. The same purpose may be traced as clearly in the history of the christian church, as it is in the history of the Jewish church. When thus defeated in corrupting the church, and silencing its testimony, Satan has ventured upon the bold experiment of attempting its destruction, by persecution and violence. When it is considered, that God Himself is actually the life of the Church; that an assault upon a renewed man is a positive and direct attack upon Jehovah, whose Holy Spirit dwells in every such man; it is difficult to say, whether the desperation or daring of the arch-enemy is most conspicuous in this proceeding. The church of God, however, is founded upon a rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. The existence of Jehovah is not more certain than the existence of His church; that church for which His well beloved Son gave His life as a ransom; and between whom and every individual member of that church there subsists a union, which "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate."

This mighty, but mysterious conflict, between God and Satan, is carried on by human instrumentality; and the present success of either exerts, for the time being, a corresponding influence upon the state and condition of mankind. The whole human family is concerned, and every individual member of it takes part in this struggle; they who are not for God being on the side of Satan. Although God influences the righteous, and Satan prompts and leads the ungodly, the freedom of every man is preserved inviolate, so that men act in this matter as moral and responsible agents. It is impos-

sible to form any adequate conception of that manifold wisdom which has planned, and that almighty power which is executing, a purpose so complicated and incomprehensible, embracing such varied and conflicting interests and influences, the whole and every individual part of which, as they are unfolded, proclaim, in one perpetual song of praise, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." (Rev. xv. 3.)

When men follow out in the church and in the state the purpose of Satan, the results are, uniformly, ungodliness and misery. When men learn the will of God and do it in relation to both, holiness and happiness shall be the certain fruits. Just in proportion to the extent in which God is honoured by a community will be the amount of its blessing from above, and happiness below; and according to the influence which men permit Satan to exert upon them will be their degradation and suffering: for "righteousness exalteth a nation, but iniquity is the ruin of any people." As there are but two classes of men, godly and ungodly; so there are but two kinds of states, godly and ungodly; christian and antichristian. Every state or nation is godly and christian, in the proportion of its conformity to the will and the purpose of God. God's will and purpose are, that every nation should make His glory, and the greatest good of the largest number, its continual aim in all it does. A truly christian state is so in all its component parts. Whatever God does is perfect, and the perfection of His work is as strikingly manifest in the moral and the social, as it is in the natural world. The Christianity of a nation depends upon the Christianity of every individual citizen in it. The godliness of a community is proportionate to

the godliness of its members. God has given a true standard, by which all nations must be tried. The fountains of every state are its families; and the great stream or river of a nation's life will correspond exactly with its source. If individual members and families of a state preponderate upon the side of godliness, no power on earth can by any means make the nation ungodly. If they preponderate upon the side of irreligion, then neither Acts of Parliament, nor oaths of allegiance, can make such a state a christian state. These may give the form, but they never can impart the vital power of godliness to a nation. The attempt to christianize a state by Act of Parliament, is about as hopeful an experiment, as would be an effort to cleanse an impure stream, when made in that part of its course where all its waters are in full flow. If the stream can be made pure, it must originate with the cleansing of its sources: so, if a nation is to be made godly, the change must be effected in the hearts and households, ere it can be witnessed in the public bearing of the nation. The Christianity of such a kingdom would be its own bulwark against every assailant; and an Act of Parliament, or an oath of allegiance for its protection, would be as needful and as effective, as the erection of a wooden barricade for the defence of an impregnable fortress of rock. Oh! that men would consider and understand, that their private and domestic habits, their conduct in their employment, their bearing in the view of others, and their discharge of social and relative duty, have all a direct and special influence for weal or for wo, to the land of their nativity. Oh! that they whose element is strife, and who would, if they could, convulse society from its centre to its circumference, in their professed anxiety to

ameliorate the suffering condition of their fellow-mortals, would bear in mind, that genuine philanthropy is noiseless in its work, and that its triumphs are bloodless, peaceful, and orderly. Ye who seek reform, by inflaming and exciting men's minds until they reach that state of frenzy, that ye yourselves shrink back with terror from the monster of your own creation, remember, while you pursue your perilous course, that you are tampering with an influence which, if you are permitted to arouse, no human power can restrain or control; and however laudable the object of your toil, do not forget, you are seeking its accomplishment in a way which God forbids, and will not bless; for we are not to do evil that good may come. Experience will teach, if men will but study the past, that violent revolutions are destructive indiscriminately of what is good, as well as what is evil. That only deserves the name of reformation, which, in effecting the removal of what is evil, is conservative of all that is good in the institutions of a country. That is a selfish and a spurious patriotism, (if there can be such a thing,) which, in an effort to emancipate and deliver one part of a community from oppression and wrong, would plunge another part of the same community, into a state of suffering and misery not less severe, than that from which they are seeking to extricate the other portion, whose cause they have espoused. Such changes are positively injurious. True patriotism is impartial, and seeks the good of all, from the Queen who occupies the throne, down through all ranks of her subjects. It will not consent to the unreasonable demand of the subject, when it infringes upon the rightful prerogative of the sovereign,—upon the free and full exercise of whose legitimate power is dependant the happiness, the peace,

and order of the nation. As little will it consent to the slightest encroachment upon the liberty of the subject, whose perfect freedom is the only guarantee of the stability and permanence of good national institutions, and without which, the powers of government would always be on the side of oppression and injustice. True patriotism will make the poor of the nation its special and peculiar care, because of their very helplessness to protect and defend themselves. But in seeking their elevation to a happier state, it will respect the property and privileges of the rich; at the same time proclaiming with a trumpet-tongue, the solemn responsibilities which accompany the possession of wealth and property. While it discountenances and unsparingly condemns the idea, that the rich must be pulled down and impoverished, in order to the lifting up of the poor; it will as unhesitatingly and uncompromisingly denounce the guilt which is incurred in the sight of God, by every man, who, having wealth, uses it not as much, yea, more, if need be, for the glory of his God and the good of his fellow-men, than he does for the gratification of his own selfish cravings and appetites, many of which are positively sinful in their nature, and mostly all of them, even when innocent in themselves, indulged to a criminal extent. True patriotism will only seek to destroy that which destroys. Its efforts to reform will always be beneficial in their results.

The Scriptures give no uncertain sound upon this point. God's teaching in this respect is both by precept and example. The parable of the tares is very instructive. The husbandman sowed good seed in his field. The enemy came and sowed tares. The servants of the husbandman wished to pluck them up so soon as they

discovered them, forgetful of the serious injury they would thereby inflict upon the good wheat. The Master said, Nay, let both grow together until the harvest; until that time comes, when the evil can be separated from the good, and destroyed without harming what is valuable and precious. The same wise and beneficent principle is exemplified by God Himself, in what preceded the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. "And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous, I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know. And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the Lord. And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee. Shall not the judge of all the earth do right? And the Lord said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes. . . . . And he said, Oh, let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there? And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake." (Gen. xviii. 20—26, 32.) The angel said unto Lot, "Haste thee, escape thither: for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither." (Gen. xix. 22.) In the beginning of this quotation, God, as it were, accommodates Himself to man's capacity in the choice of the language in which He

narrates His own procedure. God needed not to go down and make more searching investigation, in order to inform Himself: for, all things are open and naked unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. The example is meant for man's imitation, in the times of the world's history, when God would cease to interpose miraculously, either for the establishment of what is good, or the overthrow of what is evil. The lesson inculcated is one which few as yet have been found willing to learn. Men are taught to inquire with the utmost carefulness, so as to ascertain that the evils complained of are so incurable, as to render their destruction a matter of stern and imperious duty. When satisfied upon this point, they must still further consider and determine, whether there may or may not be so much of good inseparably mixed up with the evil, as to warrant their sparing the evil for the sake of the good; and if at length brought to the conclusion that the evil can and must be destroyed, then they are still under a solemn obligation, first to place what is valuable and precious beyond the reach of harm; and not until they have done so will they be warranted to adopt those measures, which shall effectually sweep away what defiles and destroys. Let none misconstrue what is here meant. Evil is evil, under whatever circumstances it exists; and as such, must be hated and abhorred with a perfect hatred. Neither individuals nor nations dare, with any regard to God's will, make any truce with sin. This world, however, is a mixture of good and evil; and because of the good, God preserves it in existence. The person of every individual believer is a mixture of good and evil; they co-exist, but the war between them will only cease with the destruction of one of them. Every nation is a mixture of good and evil;

and, in like manner, they wage war in the national mind until the one destroys the other. If a member of the human body becomes diseased, every effort must be made to heal it; and not until it becomes so putrid and corrupt as to endanger the existence of the whole body, must it be cut off. In like manner, all diseases in the body or constitution of a commonwealth, should have remedial measures applied to them; and not until they have baffled every effort to cure them, and actually endanger the existence of the commonwealth, must the diseased part be subjected to excision. When the Divine principle of life is imparted to an individual, its power and influence are ever growing, until it gain the complete mastery over him. Conversion is the work of a moment; sanctification is the work of a life-time. So with a nation: when the Divine principle of life is imparted to its constitution and laws, its power and influence are ever growing, until it obtain a complete ascendancy. The germ of holy and righteous principles may be communicated in one act of the national will, in its representative or delegated capacity: "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump;" while at the same time many generations may pass away ere the time of harvest come. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matt. v. 48.)

CHAPTER IV.

EARTHLY states or kingdoms are territorial. Each state or kingdom has its geographical limits, beyond which its power cannot be lawfully exercised. The authority of a nation is only entitled to respect, within the boundary of its own territory. A commonwealth is a union of many men, with all their civil interests, in one community, and under one government. The nature of a commonwealth will be best ascertained by an examination of its component parts; and the functions of a government must correspond with what is governed. When men unite together and become a commonwealth, it is for mutual protection and benefit. They should endeavour to repress, by the strong arm of just and equitable laws, those social and physical evils, which the selfishness and wickedness of man is ever attempting to inflict upon society; and which, if unrestrained and unpunished by law, would soon fill the whole earth with violence. Man becomes the subject of a kingdom from the time of his birth within its territory, and continues to be so until the hour of his death, if he abide within its boundary. Every subject must be protected in all his civil rights, by the power of the civil government under which he lives, in return for which he must support that government and yield obedience to its laws. Man's nature is

a compound of mind and matter. He has spiritual and he has civil properties. In regard to the spirits of men, and their properties, there is but one kingdom in all the earth, and that God claims as peculiarly His own dominion. Although this could be proved to be otherwise, still the kingdom of spirits is in its very nature beyond the limits of man's control or government; for "who knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?" He who rules in the kingdom of spirits must be omniscient and omnipresent. He must know what is in man. He must be able to search the hearts and try the reins of the children of men. This is God's peculiar province, into which none may dare to enter with impunity; and let the man who would venture to do so remember that "he opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." (2 Thess. ii. 4.) "The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's; but the earth hath he given to the children of men." (Psalm cxv. 16.) The spiritual, the unseen world, God has reserved exclusively to Himself; but the governments and kingdoms of earth He hath committed to men. Whatever a man obtains by inheritance, or gains by industry, while living upon the earth, of such a nature as he must leave behind him in the world at death, is that which the laws and governments established among men are designed to regulate and protect. The natural lives of men are also under the control and protection of human governments. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." (Gen. ix. 6.) While the spirit of man is necessarily beyond the reach of human inspection and

government, still the embodied acts of a man's spirit are subject to the authority and judgment of human tribunals; and when man yields the members of his body as the servants of unrighteousness, corporeal suffering may be, and ought to be inflicted by every well-regulated state. The distinction between what is God's and what is Cæsar's is broad and marked. "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment." (Matt. v. 21.) Until the overt act is committed, or attempted, man cannot take cognizance; because, until the wicked heart and purpose of the murderer is manifested, he is unable to prove any malicious intention. Not so with God, He knows every thought of every man's heart, and "whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment." (Matt. vi. 22.) In God's sight, causeless anger towards another is counted worthy of an equal penalty, with positive violence in the sight of men. Again, "ye have heard it said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery." (Matt. v. 27.) Before the laws of human society are transgressed, and its penalties incurred, that foul act of infamy must be perpetrated or attempted. "But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." (Matt. v. 28.) The law of God's spiritual kingdom is transgressed, the moment the impure desire finds a place in the human heart; and the penalty of His law is incurred, although the purpose is never embodied in the open act of transgression, which further exposes the man to the penalty of human laws. It is not because sin, when committed by the spirit of man, is less a sin in God's sight, and less a transgression

of God's moral law, than the same sin embodied in external acts, that man is prohibited from interference with such offences; but because of the impossibility of one man judging of the thoughts and intents of another man's mind, except when these are manifested in visible acts. The rule that is applicable to evil purposes is also applicable to good purposes. If a man cannot, and dare not if he would, punish another for his thoughts; neither may he arrogate to himself the right of rewarding another for his thoughts.

The very nature of man's spirit places it not only beyond the scrutinizing glance of another man, but also out of the reach of any means of punishment, which it is within the compass of the human imagination to devise. Those human governments that have unwisely usurped God's prerogative, and enacted laws imposing penalties upon their subjects because of their opinions, and who, in their blind and ignorant zeal for what they termed truth, justice, morality, and order, have deprived of civil privileges and civil liberty—have cast into prison—have tortured—yea, killed those who would not conform to their ways of thinking—must be told, that they are themselves the enemies of truth and justice, morality and order; they must be reminded, that their power was given them for the protection and defence of the civil privileges and liberty—the life and property—of every citizen of their nation; and if, even in one case, they have visited a man's opinions with deprivation of any one, or all of these, they have exceeded the limits of their power, by demanding what God alone is entitled to, the submission of the spirit; and because of their impotency to enforce their impious demand, they prostitute the power lodged in them for man's protection, and

exercise it for his destruction. In doing so they are guilty of impiety towards God, and treason to the commonwealth. It matters not whether this power be exercised for or against the truth—upon the persons and properties of believers or unbelievers—the sin is the same in kind; yea, if there be any difference in the degree of the offence in God's sight, they must be most guilty who dishonour Jehovah, by pretending to vindicate and support His cause and His truth, by means of cruelty, oppression, and injustice. Where God's people have suffered by reason of this pernicious principle, too long recognised and acted upon by human governments, the complete failure of the purpose has been invariably manifested. The design was to punish what is designated a disobedient, rebellious, and heretical spirit; but their only mode of access to that spirit was through the body, which it was their solemn duty to protect from injury and suffering, unmerited by any act of its own. Human rulers have not scrupled to violate the most solemn obligations of every civil government, by handing over to undeserved pains and penalties the material part of man's nature; designing, through its torture, to reach the immaterial spirit, the alleged obstinacy of which, it was their unrighteous determination to attempt to punish. But as often as they have attempted, they have been defeated; for amid the scorchings of burning faggots, while the body was in the agonies of a death so cruel, the spirit was in the heaven of joy, praising and glorifying its God and only king; to whose rightful and only sovereignty, so many have, in such circumstances, borne the most unequivocal testimony; God Himself, also, thus rebuking the bold impiety of men, who, in their pretended zeal for truth and justice, violate the

most sacred principles of that holy and beneficent government which ruleth over all.

All civil governments are ordained of God, and must be regulated by the laws and the will of God. It is the duty, the imperative obligation of every commonwealth, in every part of its national procedure, to seek first the glory of God, and with that the greatest good of the largest possible number of its subjects. It dare not, without incurring guilt in God's sight, do wilful injustice even to one. Were such a case possible, that the good of a whole nation might depend upon the wilful infliction of wrong upon one individual in it, the wrong must not, cannot be inflicted by a just government; the suffering of all must be perilled, rather than the doing of wilful injustice to one. One principle should pervade every mind in the nation; each should do unto others as he would be done by himself. Each should seek the national welfare more than his own individual welfare; and this for the best of all reasons, that being a member of the body politic, his own welfare mainly depends upon the general prosperity of the nation. Who would not rather be a free humble citizen of Great Britain, even with all its national imperfections, than a Mandarin in the Celestial Empire of China, under the absolute and despotic sway of the so-called brother of the sun? What industrious and godly mechanic in this highly favoured island would exchange the comforts and blessings of his domestic hearth and social circle for the regal dignity and attendant equipage of the poor persecuted Queen Pomare of Tahiti? And what makes Great Britain, its virtuous Queen, and government, and people, notwithstanding their many sins and grievous blemishes, the wonder and admiration of the

world? Hear it, ye ministers of state, who by means of worldly diplomacy, not over-scrupulous in your choice of expedients, would strive to maintain her in her high position among the nations. It is not your time-serving policy, nor your statecraft, that has made Great Britain what she is; and if only guided by such principles and protected by such defenders, her glory would soon depart. Hear it, ye place hunters, whose patriotism is proportioned to the price you can procure for it; had all her sons been like thee, she never would have had a name or a place among the nations. It is not the pittance which the resources of so great a nation can easily afford you that is grudged. It is the dishonour of our nation and our name. It is the destruction of British spirit, which every lover of his country deprecates in you. Oh! if left to such as you, what would become of our nation? Hear it, ye senators, who have unwisely yielded up your independence to a party in the state, thereby placing yourselves under the sway of a political despotism, that has converted you into submissive tools in the hands of a few great and leading spirits of your day. Left to you, Great Britain would have been under a system of tyranny, not less oppressive than that, under which many of the nations of Europe are now groaning. If ye are unfit or unwilling to take the trouble of judging upon great questions of national policy for yourselves, then abuse not the confidence of a free and generous people, by giving up their independence as well as your own to the will of another. But if you are both able and willing, in the name of justice and humanity, how can you trammel yourselves by the chains of party, which have too frequently drawn its votaries into circumstances grievously inconsistent? Hear it, ye pos-

sessors of the land and wealth of the nation. If left to those among you, whose selfish gratification and enjoyment have been their only care and thought; the style of whose mansions, the grandeur of whose equipages, the comfort of whose horses and hounds, and the preservation of whose game, has given them more concern, than the social and domestic happiness of their fellow beings dwelling upon their estates, of whom they are, because of their exalted station among them, the heavenly appointed friends, protectors, and guardians. Left to you, Great Britain would have been a nation of serfs, and upon your brows would have been written the curse of tyrants. It is not your mansions nor your equipages that are sinful in themselves; the possession of these, and their full enjoyment, are compatible with a godly, a humane, and a patriotic spirit. It is your neglect of highest duty that is your crime; yea, a crime which, if unrepented of, may be visited with relentless fury upon your own heads, while God spares and blesses those, in caring for whom you would have found, if attended to, your chief delight and greatest source of blessing. Hear it, ye princely merchants and wealthy manufacturers, who, in your haste to be rich, supposing gain to be godliness, have, in your unseemly race of rivalry and competition with one another, forgotten the claims of your hewers of wood and drawers of water. Consider how you have stinted the remuneration of your poor workers, until at length the majority of the manufacturing and commercial population of the nation can scarcely earn, by a long and laborious day's toil, as much as will provide for themselves and dependants, what is essential to maintain life. If left to you, Great Britain would have been, and will yet soon be, a nation of help-

less paupers. It is not your commendable industry and enterprise, it is not your free and unrestricted commerce with all the world that are at fault. British merchants and manufacturers are the glory of the commercial world, and have nothing to fear from the rivalry of any other nation. Her source of weakness is within herself. The atmosphere of her counting-rooms is contaminated. The manufacturer, in calculating the cost of his labour, forgets, that his calculation involves the highest moral principles of the Divine government. In determining the cost of brick and mortar, and the wear and tear of machinery, his conclusions, right or wrong, are untrammelled by any principle of morality. Too many place human labour on the same platform with their machinery, and count its cost as they would the cost of an inanimate piece of matter. They account of their hundreds and their thousands of immortal beings, toiling in their mills and serving in their warerooms, as if man, the image of his God, even the Eternal Jehovah, had been created for no other purpose, than to serve the temporary ends of a few enterprising speculators, and their boasted commerce. Know it and consider it well, ye who, perhaps ignorantly, grind and oppress the poor and the helpless. Commerce, manufactures, arts, science, and every earthly invention, are intended to promote the happiness, and increase the comforts of the whole human family. If then, in your race for cheapness in production, you take not into account the comforts and happiness of the many, who incessantly toil and labour to enrich the few; if to send cheap prints to China, and cheap shirts to colonies, you diminish the comforts, and destroy the happiness of innumerable families in your native land; plead what you may in extenuation of your

conduct, it can only be viewed in one aspect by every impartial observer, and the judgment of such cannot fail to be, that to your own cupidity and love of gain, you are sacrificing the highest interests of the community to which you belong; that for the same godless end, you are prepared to reckon as less than nought, the moral and social welfare of a large portion of a great nation. You would do well to keep ever before your minds the apostolic warning—"Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasures together for the last days. Behold the hire of the labourers which have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth, and the cries of them which have reaped, have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth." (James v. 1—4.) Those frequently recurring commercial panics and crises have their origin in the violation of sound moral principles; and it may be said, without fear of contradiction, that the merchants and manufacturers of Great Britain would have been more prosperous in their commerce, and more happy and contented in their minds at the present day, if they had honoured God more, and served mammon less, in times past. And were they now surrounded and served by a godly and pious generation of workers, their wealth would not have been less, and their joy would have been unspeakable.

Hear it, ye sons and daughters of toil, who, forgetful of your high dignity as immortal beings, content yourselves with the unrestrained indulgence of sensual

appetites and brutish desires; who, ceasing to recognise the claims of your God, have acted towards your employers and in your families, as if you owed Him no allegiance, and were indifferent alike as to his promised blessings to those who honour Him, and His denunciations against all workers of iniquity. If left to you, Great Britain would never have emerged from its original obscurity and degradation. Your misery and your suffering, no one can dispute. There are many, very many of your fellow-countrymen, who deeply and truly sympathize with you. Blame not your employers. True, they neglect their duty, but it must not be concealed from you, that if even their reproach were wiped away, and your pecuniary circumstances improved, your responsibility only would be increased in God's sight; your condition would be little, if at all improved. Your personal iniquities are the cause of all your sorrow. Search your hearts and your motives, your pursuits and your misnamed pleasures, and in them you will find for what it is God is contending with you individually and as a class; and because of which He employs others as His instruments in correcting and chastising your grievous sins. Return to God, and He will return to you. Serve him in all things, and He will honour you. Be virtuous and godly, and "who is he that can harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good." Your elevation and improvement must begin with yourselves. In vain will you hope for betterness in your condition, so long as you content yourselves with declaiming against others. I repeat, for it needs to be repeated, ye are the authors of your own misery. Your sins afflict you, and except ye repent and be converted and healed, by Divine influence, ye cannot be extricated by human

means from your perilous position. Oh! that my voice, accompanied by the mighty power of God's Holy Spirit, in his quickening, enlightening, and sanctifying influences, could reach every heart sunk in degradation and sorrow through sin, in all the land; and that, through its sound, God would impart light, life, love, liberty, and holiness to the sinful, and therefore, suffering sons and daughters of toil in my native country. Abandon, give up for ever, your so-called political associations, through which you have been pursuing a phantom, which has still eluded your grasp, and the only effect of which as yet, has been, the unsettling occasionally of the minds of the community, because of your threatened insubordination. Combine! Yes! Combine in all parts of our land. Organize in every city, and in every street of every city. Assail every house, and every member of every family. But let it be a combination among yourselves, for the social, the moral, and the religious improvement of the labouring population. Let it be an organization in the true spirit of independent men, supported by yourselves, for the accomplishment of one of the greatest achievements, that shall ever be recorded in the page of history—the moral renovation of the families of the labouring classes, through schools and churches, provided and supported by themselves. Let your weapons of assault be the cross of Jesus and the word of God. By these means, and the blessing of God, this generation would not pass away, until ye would become the strength and the glory of the greatest nation that ever was in the earth. Your moral worth, and your religious principles, would at once secure to you every political and civil privilege, a free nation can confer upon any of its members. Your employers would not then venture to disregard your just demands,

and if they did, it would be permitted, only to give your God an opportunity of publicly testifying the care He takes of those who trust in Him. Your homes and your families would be Bethels, in which God would delight to dwell; and His blessing would make you prosperous in all your ways, and you should want for no good thing.

Britain is nevertheless great, and hers is a true and enduring greatness. Unlike the evanescent glory of ancient kingdoms, Britain's glory is ever increasing, and shall never come to an end. Britain owes all she is, or ever shall be, to the cross of Christ, and the leaven of the principles of the christian religion; not as established and maintained by the force of her civil power—that is a blot in the page of her history—but, thanks be to God, the time draweth very near indeed, when in His abundant mercy, by the outpouring of His Holy Spirit upon our senators and the great body of the people, He will teach them true wisdom, and make them of one heart and one mind, in putting away from among them, without violence or civil commotion, the unclean thing. She owes all her greatness to God's sovereign grace and mercy, in maintaining through many generations, among individuals in the palaces of her sovereigns, the mansions of her nobles, the ranks of her senators, the marts of her commerce, and the dwellings of her artizans, the vital principles of the christian religion; fanned and kept alive in vigorous action, by the faithful preaching of divinely honoured ministers of the gospel, who, of whatever denomination, acknowledged Jesus as their only king and master, and made His glory and the salvation of sinners, the only, the exclusive, the continual aim of all their ministrations; that great day, when all secrets shall be revealed, can alone disclose the inseparable connection,

between the quiet, unobtrusive, noiseless, but ceaseless efforts of christian philanthropists in past generations, and Britain's present greatness. It is not any particular denomination of Christians, as such, that God has so highly honoured; but it is every individual, of whatever denomination, who loved the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, that God has blessed; first, by giving him to drink of the fountain of living waters himself; and then, by making him a secondary fountain, from whose ever overflowing springs, streams of life, light, love, and happiness have been diffused around him, in his day and generation. To these same Divine influences, now more powerfully and more widely in operation than at any former period of her history, will Great Britain, in the course of a few years, attribute that unequalled glory to which she is yet destined; when she shall become, by God's mighty power working upon her sons and daughters, the light of all nations, and the praise of the Lord in all the earth. Arise, arise, thou chosen people; cease to trust in thine armies and thy navies, thy silver and thy gold. Trust in the Lord thy God: He is thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.

CHAPTER V.

"THE house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." (1 Tim. iii. 15.) This is the apostolic designation of the christian church, and it is a most comprehensive one. This passage contains the nature, the name, and the office of the christian church. It is the house of God, the dwelling-place of Jehovah. God is a Spirit, and He fills all things: for "whither can we flee from His presence?" "Howbeit, the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? Hath not my hand made all these things?" (Acts vii. 48—50.) Solomon's house which he built was not the kind of house, for Stephen contrasts it with the nature and attributes of Jehovah; and thus proves that Solomon's temple, like the whole Jewish ritual, was but typical of a more glorious spiritual dispensation. God's house is a spiritual house.

Because it is a house, it must be built up, commencing with its foundation. "When Jesus came into the coast of Cesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some Elias;

and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matt. xvi. 13—18.) This passage of Scripture has been the subject of much controversy, and there has been no ordinary disputing as to its true meaning. It reveals two important truths, the one inseparably connected with the other. The Lord Jesus Christ, in His Divine nature, is the Rock upon which His church is built; and the Father's gift of faith, (also Divine in its origin,) to each believer, is the Rock upon which he rests as a lively stone of the spiritual house. That Jesus Christ is the only foundation of His church, cannot be disputed by any who believe the Scriptures. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. iii. 11.) "For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock is Christ." (1 Cor. x. 4.) The other truth in relation to every believer is not less indisputable: "For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." (Eph. ii. 8.) "For in Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision: but faith which worketh by love." (Gal. v. 6.) "For this cause, I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened

with might by his Spirit in the inner man: that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith: that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." (Eph. iii. 14—19.) The apostle Peter himself testifies with great clearness and distinctness the true meaning of our Saviour's words. "Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth in him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious." (1 Pet. ii. 6, 7.)

Although it is because He is the Eternal Son of God, the equal with the Father, that He is the Rock of Ages: still it is as Immanuel, God with us—the Word made flesh that dwelt among us—and most especially as the Lamb that was slain, and in this sense the inferior, the servant of the Father doing His work and will; it is because of His obedience unto death, and the shedding of His precious blood for the ransom of His church, that Jesus Christ is made the chief corner stone of God's house. Next to Jesus, as the only foundation, and not distinct or apart from Him, but by faith in Him, is laid the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. "The church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood." (Acts xx. 28.) "Jesus Christ whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." (Rom. iii. 24, 25.) To the apostles, Christ said, "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: and ye also shall bear

witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning." (John xv. 26, 27.) It is as witnesses to the truth as it is in Jesus—as preachers of the gospel—as ambassadors of Christ, beseeching men to be reconciled to God for Christ's sake—built themselves by God upon the only foundation, Christ Jesus, that the apostles become the foundation, upon which God builds others, by the gift of the same faith, in the same blood. The record of the fulfilment of Christ's promise is contained in the Acts of the Apostles. "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts ii. 1—5.) "Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath sent forth this, which ye now see and hear. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." (Acts ii. 14, 32, 33, 36, 37, 41.) Our Lord Himself, in His last intercessory prayer, makes fully known His

own relation to the church, and through Him, the relation of the apostles. "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things, whatsoever thou hast given me, are of thee: for I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." (John xvii. 4—8, 17, 18, 20.)

The apostles, as men, differed in no respect from other men in their natural unfitness for so high and holy a position in the house of God. All of them were sinners by nature and practice: one of them confesses himself the chief of sinners. By the grace of God they were made what they still are, in conjunction with the prophets, the foundation of the building. I apprehend it is not their persons, but their teachings, and particularly their writings, that have made them the foundation of the christian church. The fact of their being associated with the prophets, whose testimony is a written testimony, favours the opinion that it is chiefly the written testimony of the apostles that has made them, with the prophets, the foundation of the church. In one sense,

already described, it is true, the Lord Jesus is the only foundation of God's house; but in another sense, the apostles and prophets are the foundation, Jesus Christ being the chief corner stone. Christ in His person has no equal, either in heaven or in earth, among angels or men —whether apostles or prophets,—for He is that glorious and holy one who is God over all, blessed for ever. But in regard to His teaching, in bearing witness unto the truth, He has given to the teaching and testimony of the apostles and prophets, that Divine authority which belongs to His own; for He has declared—"He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me." (Matt. x. 40.) The reason why this is so, is beautifully illustrated in the following passages:—"For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me." (John xvii. 8.) "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass: and he sent and signified it by his angel, unto his servant John." (Rev. i. 1.)

The Divine authority of Christ's teaching, and His true Messiahship, are attested by the miracles which He wrought; and to these He Himself repeatedly appeals, in confirmation of his claims to be regarded and honoured as the Son of God. "Now, when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear: the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." (Matt. xi. 2—5.) "If I do not the

works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works; that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him." (John x. 37, 38.)

The Divine authority of the teachings and writings of the apostles and prophets, is attested by similar evidence. The prophets testify of Jesus, and Jesus bears witness unto them. When our Lord, after His resurrection, journeyed with the two disciples from Jerusalem to Emmaus; "Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself." (Luke xxiv. 27.) The eleven apostles were gathered together the same evening at Jerusalem, and as the two disciples spake unto the others, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them; "And he said unto them, These are the words I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me." (Luke ii. 44.) The apostles also bear witness unto the prophets. "God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days addressed us by His Son." (Heb. i. 1, 2.) "We have also a more sure word of prophecy: whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts. Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Peter i. 19—21.) The apostles wrought miracles in attestation of the Divine authority of what they taught and wrote.

"Fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles." (Acts ii. 43.) "And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people, insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one." (Acts v. 12, 15, 16.) God has manifested a peculiar jealousy of His honour and glory in His own house. He has not left room for conjecture, as to what men are to receive and believe concerning Himself. The apostolic writers of the epistles are five in number. The epistles contain the doctrines taught by the apostles, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, after the resurrection and ascension of our Lord. Two of these writers, Peter and John, had special marks put upon them during the earthly pilgrimage of our Lord. Peter and his brother Andrew were the first called by our Lord to the office of the apostleship. James, the son of Zebedee, and John, his brother, were the next. Peter, James, and John alone, were witnesses of the transfiguration of our Lord on the mount, when, "behold a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him." (Matt. xvii. 5.) Peter, James, and John alone, were the witnesses of His agony in the garden of Gethsemane. "Then cometh Jesus with them (the eleven) unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto his disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and

pray yonder. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here and watch with me." (Matt. xxvi. 36—38.) John was emphatically and peculiarly the beloved disciple, and leaned upon the breast of Jesus during the time of the last supper. Peter and John followed Jesus when he was apprehended. "And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. That disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest. But Peter stood at the door without." (John xviii. 15, 16.) Just as John was peculiarly the object of Christ's love, so was Peter, in a very peculiar manner, the object of Satan's awful hostility. "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." (Luke xxii. 31, 32.) John stood by the cross of Christ during His crucifixion, and saw the blood and water flow from the wound in the Saviour's side after His death. "Jesus . . . saw . . . the disciple standing by whom he loved." (John xix. 26.) "When they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe." (John xix. 33—35.) To Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, who very early in the morning, the first day of the week, came unto the Saviour's sepulchre at the

rising of the sun, the following message was declared by the angel:—"Be not affrighted. Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen, he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you." (Mark xvi. 6, 7.) It is recorded of Peter and John only that they visited our Lord's sepulchre, on the morning of His resurrection. "Then she (Mary Magdalene) runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him. Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying: yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, and the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed." (John xx. 2—8.) They alone of all the apostles were witnesses of these minute particulars attending our Lord's resurrection: they saw them all, and they could not but believe their senses: and what makes their testimony invaluable is, that while they believed what they saw with their eyes, they did not then believe that Jesus was risen from the dead. "For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead." (John xx. 9.) To Simon our Lord gave the command, "Feed my lambs."

"Feed my sheep." . . . "Feed my sheep." (John xxi. 15—17.) The latter end of Simon alone did Jesus foretell. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God." Thus were Peter, James, and John, more especially Peter and John, not only prepared, but positively singled out and pointed at by our Lord Himself, not as the princes or the lords of God's heritage, but as those upon whose testimony the church in all ages might implicitly rely; as those whose teachings and writings should be regarded as of equal authority in the house of God, with the word of Jesus Himself. Herein is manifested that wondrous care Jehovah has taken in founding His church, to prevent the shadow of a ground of plea on the part of any of His intelligent creatures; whether they be those who have despised and rejected a testimony so complete and overwhelming, or those who have incurred the awful guilt of making the word of God of none effect by human tradition.

A perusal of the history of the Acts of the Apostles will show the prominent part assigned to Peter, James, and John, in the christian church at its foundation in the world; and thus is explained the end to be served by Christ's selection of them from among the other apostles to be the witnesses of His transfiguration on the mount, His agonies in the garden, and the minute circumstances which accompanied His resurrection from the dead. The writings of Peter and John, which include their teachings, as recorded in the Acts of the

Apostles, are unquestionably of Divine authority; and, being God's word, what they have taught and written is in the same sense the foundation of the house of God that the teachings of Christ Himself and the writings of the prophets are.

The history of the Acts of the Apostles relates more of Paul individually than of any other of the apostles. Fourteen out of twenty epistles are written by Paul. Paul's own claim to be regarded as an apostle is frequently alluded to in his writings; and in the opening salutation of nine of his Epistles, he declares that he was called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ. The apostle Peter, however, whose testimony is sufficient, bears witness that the Epistles of Paul are of equal authority with the other Scriptures. "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless: and account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things: in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction." (1 Peter iii. 14—16.)

The writer of the Epistle of James was a near kinsman of our Lord. He seems to have presided over the Assembly of the Church, spoken of in Acts xv. 13—29; and Paul speaks of him in Galatians ii. 9, and associates him with Cephas or Peter, and John, as seeming to be pillars. Jude was the brother of James, and wrote the epistle which bears his name. The pre-eminence of James the brother of John, is that of being

the only apostle whose martyrdom is recorded in the Scriptures. Peter and Paul were both forewarned that they would require to seal their testimony with their blood; and although their death is not recorded in the Scriptures, it is foretold, the former by our Lord, the latter by Paul himself. To John was given the Revelation of things to come; the fulfilment of all which, in their appointed time, will be an additional testimony to the truth of all he has written. There is an agreeable harmony noticeable in all God's procedure, and the statements of all Scripture are remarkably consistent with each other. It is abundantly clear that Jesus Christ is the only foundation of the house of God; while at the same time the house is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief corner stone.

The Great Architect of this spiritual house is God. The particularity of the instructions given to Moses in founding the Jewish church, was meant to typify the minuteness and exactness of God's purpose in relation to His spiritual house. God has a fixed plan, predetermined in the counsel of His own will before the foundation of the world; and according to this plan the whole building, in every part, must be framed. The Great Master-Builder who superintends and carries on the work is the Holy Ghost, through whose almighty power Jesus was raised from the dead, and by whom the apostles and prophets were inspired; so that through their teachings and writings He has laid the foundation of the spiritual house, Jesus Christ being the chief corner stone. All the stones are "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of

the blood of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter i. 2.) The natural condition of those chosen, and the change necessary to fit them for their place in God's house, is thus described by Paul:—"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." . . . . "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." . . . . "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." (Eph. ii. 1—3, 10, 19—22.) These passages are sufficiently plain, and need no comment; their evident scope being to prove, that the work of redemption is begun, carried on, and completed in every individual believer, and in the whole family of the saints, by the might and resistless energy of the Holy Spirit. Men are represented as dead; He quickens and sanctifies them, and through Him they are built up together.

Man is an intelligent and responsible agent, and in all His procedure the Holy Spirit deals with him as such. The work is carried on in each individual as if

he alone were the whole building; but the Holy Spirit works by the man, not without him. It is impossible to speak of the Divine agency without including the human agency. The Divine agency imparts and sustains the energy. The human agency acts by the energy so imparted and sustained. The Divine agent quickens, and at that very moment the human agent lives. The Divine agent imparts faith, and the human agent believes. The Divine agent opens the understanding, and the human agent understands the Scriptures. The Divine agent makes willing in the day of His power, and the human agent is made willing. The believer works out his own salvation with fear and trembling; for the Divine agent worketh in him, both to will and to do of His good pleasure. If men would confine themselves to practical views of christian doctrine, there would be great gain to the christian religion; and a consistent daily christian practice would teach a man experimentally the truth, which no amount of human argument could persuade him of theoretically. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." (John vii. 17.) The study of God's word in a controversial spirit, and for purposes of controversy, is a dangerous and most unprofitable occupation. Some men may imagine they do God service by their strifes and contentions about christian doctrine; but the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering. Men would do well to try themselves in regard to this matter, for assuredly, it is a grievous reproach to the christian cause.

The work of preparing a lively stone for the house of God, is one of infinite magnitude. It exceeds in importance all that is known to man of God's other works.

Man possesses an immortal soul, in a state of alienation from his God and Creator. He is depraved, miserable, and wretched in time. Wo is his eternal doom, because of sin. So incurably obstinate is his heart, that no finite power can prevail against it. Promises and threatenings, persuasions and remonstrances, are resorted to in vain, in order to effect a change. In whatever stage of existence, in whatever state of society, and in all circumstances, the unrenewed heart of man is one and the same—enmity against God. In such a state, man is loathsome in God's sight; and every human being is born into the world with a depraved and sinful nature. Angels and men are powerless to change man's wicked heart. A man cannot change his own heart. This inability, however, so far from being any palliation or mitigation of the sin of his state, is, in its origin, the very offence of a carnal mind in the sight of God. Man is free; his freedom of choice is entire and unrestricted, in the most absolute sense of the term, free: and if a man cannot change himself, it is simply because, as a free agent, he will not. In other words, the very essence of sin, is the opposition of man's will to God's holy, just, and good law; so that man's so-called inability to cease to do evil and learn to do well, is just the result of the fixed determination of his will to do evil. Although the foundation of the house is laid, the atonement of Jesus having satisfied the claims of Divine justice, enabling God to be just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly; the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, being able to cleanse from all sin; still, without its application to the heart of a man, not only through himself, but by himself, he can form no part of God's house. This no man can do; and yet it must be done, and in this precise way, before any man

is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone. Man's inability (I use this term because it is commonly used by others, but I rather think it conveys an erroneous idea,) to apply the atonement of Christ to himself, in other words, to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, originates, as in the former case, in his unwillingness; and instead of being any excuse for his not being saved, it is *the* very ground of his condemnation, from the moment he hears the gospel. He was under a previous sentence of condemnation, because of the determination of his will to do evil. He is under a new sentence of condemnation, because of the determination of his will not to be saved by the atonement of Christ. Many a construction has been put upon this part of revealed truth; but it is unquestionable, that man cannot obey the command to love and serve God, just simply because he will not; and man cannot obey the command to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, for the same reason, because he will not. "Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life." (John v. 40.)

It is an ascertained fact, that thousands of sinful men have believed and served God; and myriads will yet believe and serve Him on this earth; so that whatever difficulties exist, the passing from a state of condemnation to a state of salvation is intended to be common. It is obvious that upon the state of the man's will depends his course of action; and truly great is the mystery of godliness, that the will of man, the perfect freedom of which is essential to his responsibility as a moral and intelligent being, should be changed by an influence from without himself, and yet in the very act of imparting that influence, man's will continue as free in the

first volition after being so changed, as it was before it. Yea, in the very act of change, man knows no difference in the exercise of his will. It is most remarkable, that there are very few, if even one, who can actually point to the moment of his life when he became a new creature; and may not this be wisely ordered by the great Jehovah, as a standing testimony in favour of this important truth. The means God employs in effecting the change are corroborative of man's freedom in believing unto salvation. God does not appear as he did on Mount Sinai, because the effect then produced was terror, not willing submission. He does not make himself known by the working of miracles; these appeal to the senses, and were unavailing in the time of our Lord. In short, there is no external revelation of God, not even the written word, given to man in such a manner as to operate on his mind and will, by the effect it produces upon his senses. So much the reverse is God's wise plan, that the means by which God changes man, so little appeal to his carnal nature, that it is written, they are unto the Greeks foolishness, and unto the Jews a stumbling-block. God's wisdom is here most wondrously made manifest: it was needful that Divine power be exerted upon man to change him, or else he would have been for ever an outcast from his God. In the exercise of this power, man would have ceased to be a responsible being, had his will been suspended in its free operation, even for a moment; the more especially, as the momentary deprivation of the freedom of his will, would have been for the very purpose of effecting its revolution; so that, in the means employed, as well as in the manner of the operation of omnipotent power, it behoved God to deal as with an intelligent and accountable creature. Moreover, it must be manifest in

the whole procedure, that God is the author and finisher of man's faith, and that neither the means, nor the man himself, have in any way, even in the smallest possible degree, wrought efficaciously, apart from God's Holy Spirit, in effecting this mighty change.

The change effected is, in the case of every man who is changed, instantaneous. Months, years may elapse, ere its effects are observable in the life of the individual. The change itself, however, is in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye: the Son of Man speaks, and the dead soul hears His voice, and awakes to everlasting life. This change is called repentance unto life; conversion unto God; being born of water and of the Spirit; believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. These terms give different views of one and the same thing. Repentance is a change of mind, and it is from death unto life. Conversion is a change of the mind's relation from Satan unto God. Being born, is a change of state from pollution, under the figure of the cleansing of water, and from death, by the power of God's Spirit. Believing, is a change of feeling, desire, affection, and hope, because of a settled trust in God through Jesus Christ. Faith, working by love, within a man, producing peace and joy through the Holy Spirit, is the description of the change. Although faith is the gift of God, it cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. The preaching of the gospel by one man, and the hearing of it by another man, are the simple means by which God accomplishes His great and gracious purpose of mercy to man through a crucified Redeemer.

Not only is man a free, he is also an active agent in the building up of God's house. Every stone is a lively stone, zealous and active in his own preparation for his

place in God's house; zealous and active in the preparation of others for their places in the same house. It is a growing building. One stone becomes the instrument of imparting life to other stones; and these other stones become, in their turn, instruments of imparting life to more. The Spirit of God imparts life to every man without exception; but while He does so, it is only through the active operation of the man's own inherent faculties and energies, and by the use of the divinely appointed means. Wherever the Spirit of God is working, man is also working. Man will not work without the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God will not work without man. Man wills to work when the Spirit of God works in him; and the Spirit of God works in man, when man wills to work himself. Man works through the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of God works through man. "What God has joined, let man not put asunder." This admonition is much needed by all professing christians. The evils under which the visible church groans in all its sections, arise from two sources. Men will attempt to sever what God has united: men will attempt to unite what God has severed. It is the wresting of Scripture, in theory and in practice, that weakens the power of the christian church to do good. It is a startling fact, which shall be treated of in its proper place, that Satan has gained his most signal triumphs in the church when, by transforming himself into an angel of light, he has set the faithful holding one truth, to wage war with the faithful holding another truth; setting the faithful against the faithful, and the truth against the truth. This is his last expedient; but, alas! it has not been the least successful in serving his purpose.

In God's house all men are placed upon a footing of perfect equality. All are the sons and daughters of God. Every one is the dwelling place of the Most High. All are vessels, which evidently means all are for use, for service. That use and service is to glorify God—to get good themselves, and to do good to others. There is, however, a difference, but it is in the degree of usefulness and service, not in the kind. There are no superiors or inferiors in God's house. How can it be so? when it is the same God that fills each stone with life, that dwells in the whole house. The stone most honoured, is the stone that endured and suffered most. He who has been made the chief corner stone, was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: the foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, but he had not where to lay his head. He was made perfect through suffering. This is the law of God's house; it is through much tribulation each stone is prepared, and those vessels of the house are the most honoured, who labour and who suffer the most for the glory of God, and the good of the house. There are vessels of gold, and silver, and wood. The gold and silver vessels are not, however, represented by the parties who have arrogated to themselves a pre-eminence over others in God's house. The golden vessel is he whose faith has been purified in a fiery furnace of affliction. The silver vessel is he over whom his Lord has sat as a refiner of silver, when he was in the fire being refined. Christ alone is a master, the master in God's house; and they who call any man upon earth master, be his pretensions what they may, partake in the sin of giving God's honour and glory to another.

God's house will be cleansed of all its impurities.

All those distinctions which man has introduced must be swept away. God's house is a house of prayer for all nations; it has been made a house of merchandize; but the same Jesus who drove the money changers out of the Jewish temple still lives, and is still the master of His Father's house; and though the time seem long, He will come, and will not tarry; for at the appointed period He will manifest Himself, in the destruction of that worldly and secularizing spirit, that cramps and enervates the efforts of His people, to promote and extend the knowledge of His name. Then shall men cease to lord it over God's heritage. Then shall they cease to buy and sell in God's house. Then will men cease to suppose that gain is godliness. God grant that He may come not in wrath, but in mercy; not to destroy, but to save; not to take vengeance, but to display the riches of His grace. May the sign of His coming be an awakening of His church throughout all the earth, and her active preparation for a final and complete separation from every wordly influence, either from without or within, in order to its visible union in all its sections, and its ultimate union with Himself. May the Holy Spirit even now, and from this forth, be poured out as on the day of pentecost, in His quickening and converting, sanctifying and enlightening influences; and may the effects produced be as remarkable—even a self-denial among those servants of the Lord, who by His grace may be constrained to sacrifice upon the altar of faith that living for which they are required to do homage to another; and accompanied, as most assuredly it will be, by an abundant outpouring of the spirit of liberality upon all the lively stones of God's house; resulting in an overflowing treasury of voluntary

offerings, by which the work of God's house will be most prosperously sustained at home, and most efficiently spread abroad among all nations. Fear not, I am with thee, saith the Lord. I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. Our God is a very present help in time of need. He will fill His house with blessings, till there be not room enough to contain.

The church of God is also the kingdom of heaven—the kingdom of God. As the house of God does not partake of the character of an earthly house, neither does the kingdom of God partake of the character of an earthly kingdom. The house is spiritual. "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." (Luke xvii. 20, 21.) The kingdom of God is also a spiritual kingdom. This peculiar kingdom does not embrace the whole spiritual world. God is undoubtedly the Sovereign Ruler of all spirits, whether righteous or wicked; but this kingdom is a kingdom of righteous and saved spirits, as opposed to the kingdom of wicked angels and men. This kingdom is set up in this world, but is altogether different from the kingdoms of the world. They are territorial: God's spiritual kingdom has no geographical limits, for, "they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God." (Luke xiii. 29.) Earthly kingdoms are limited to certain tribes and tongues of people. God's kingdom is of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues. The great ones in earthly kingdoms exercise dominion and authority over the citizens. It is not so in God's kingdom: the great in it are the servants of all. Christ has said, "Ye know

that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." (Matt. xx. 25—27.) This law of God's kingdom, so contrary to flesh and blood, and therefore most difficult to observe, and grievously trangressed, is enforced by the highest of all considerations, the example of the King Himself: "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Matt. xx. 28.)

God's kingdom has an origin so minute and limited, that it is scarcely perceptible. "The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took and sowed in his field: which indeed is the least of all seeds." (Matt. xiii. 31, 32.) This is true in relation to its first establishment in the world; when its great Founder was gaining that triumph in the garden of Gethsemane, and upon the cross of Calvary, upon which the kingdom is founded. He was alone: "all the disciples forsook him and fled." (Matt. xxvi. 56.) After his resurrection and ascension to glory, the number of his followers were about an hundred and twenty. (Acts i. 15.) These were selected from among the obscure and powerless portion of the Jewish community. Its diffusion and extension are accomplished without noise, and without force. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." (Matt. xiii. 33.) Its extension may be accompanied with clamour and violence, but these ought never to be resorted to by the citizens of Zion; they originate with

the enemies of the king, and are the result of their anxiety to suppress and overthrow His increasing power. The ambassadors of peace cease to be such when they begin to repel clamour by clamour, and violence by violence. It is God's will that His people suffer if need be, but they dare not sin. To use clamour or violence in the propagation or defence of the kingdom, is a transgression of its fundamental law. The servants of Christ are like-minded to Himself; they neither strive nor cry, neither is their voice heard in the streets.

The law of earthly kingdoms is resistance and retaliation. The law of God's kingdom is forbearance and submission when injured. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, that ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." (Matt. v. 38, 39.) It may be, alas! it is too true, that professing christians act as if this law had ceased to be binding upon them. Be not deceived. He that spake from heaven will yet vindicate his own authority, and cause His benevolent laws to be observed in His own kingdom. Vengeance is the law of earthly kingdoms. Forgiveness the law of Christ's kingdom. Do as you are done unto, is the law of earthly kingdoms. Do as ye would be done by, is the law of God's kingdom. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." (Matt. v. 43, 44.) An implacable spirit is hateful in God's sight; without forgiveness from God, man is an

alien to His kingdom; except he forgives all other men, God will not forgive him. "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matt. vi. 14, 15.)

As a house has to be founded and built, so must a kingdom be founded and established. The same passage which describes the foundation of the house, describes also the foundation of the kingdom of God. Both figures are employed by our Lord, in what He said to Peter. "And I say unto thee," . . . . "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Matt. xviii. 18, 19.) The words of our Lord recorded in this passage, are very distinct, and very explicit. Whatever mystery attends their meaning, the language used is not obscure. There can be no question as to our Lord having given to Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and there is as little reason to doubt that the keys given were intended to be used; and further, that they have been used precisely in the way that Jesus intended. The binding and the loosing power given to Peter, is inseparably connected with the use of the keys, and would therefore continue so long as the keys were in use, but no longer. What the binding and loosing refers to is more fully explained in John's gospel, where it is recorded that this power was given to all the apostles. "Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so I send you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:

whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them: and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." (John xx. 21—23.)

That passage is not in Scripture that will prove this power either to have been possessed or exercised by any of the apostles, in the sense interpreted by some, not even by Peter himself, who is specially named. The case of Ananias and his wife, recorded in the 5th chapter of the Acts of Apostles, is the only one that has the slightest resemblance to the exercise of such a power. The narrative begins by relating the offence of Ananias and Sapphira. "But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, and kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet." (Acts v. 1, 2.) It is only upon the supposition that Peter detected this fraud himself, as our Lord would have done, had he been in his place, by the knowledge of what was passing in the heart of Ananias, at the time he was laying the money at the apostles' feet, that there is the semblance of the exercise of the power referred to. But such a supposition is blasphemous; it is the attribute of Deity to search the hearts and try the reins of men; and all God's attributes are incommunicable. What is there in the record of this transaction to warrant even the idea that this knowledge was specially revealed to Peter? It is not said who told Peter the price Ananias received for the possessions he sold; and might it not have been communicated to him through human agency? It is well known that God works by means, and there being no record to the contrary in this case, the inference is legitimate, that Peter came to his knowledge of this transaction without any miraculous interposition. But

allowing that the Holy Spirit revealed this matter unto him, it is just a parallel case to that passage in Matthew, where it is said, "Blessed art thou Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. xvi. 17.) This was the knowledge of God the Son, revealed by God the Father; but not the knowledge of God the Son as known by God the Father; for "no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." (Matt. xi. 27.) So that such an opinion, even if fully warranted by Scripture, which it is not, in no way favours the idea of Peter exercising more power personally, on this occasion, than on any other. The sequel of then arrative rather proves the opposite, for he does not denounce Ananias, and pronounce the punishment of his sin—he only expostulates with him regarding it, and declares its enormity. "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. Ananias, hearing these words, fell down, and gave up the ghost." (Acts v. 3—5.) The narrative furnishes no evidence to prove that Peter even foreknew the issue, until it had actually taken place. I rather think it furnishes evidence to prove the very opposite. Compare what Peter said to Sapphira afterwards, with what he said to Ananias. "Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out.

Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost." (Acts v. 9, 10.) Why this difference in the concluding part of Peter's address to Sapphira—"they shall carry thee out," being an intimation of her doom, which was not made known in the case of Ananias? Undoubtedly the circumstances must have been different, and the conclusion is legitimate, that in the case of Ananias, Peter did not know God's purpose until it was accomplished; and just as Sapphira committed her husband's sin, in ignorance of what happened to her husband, for, "she came in, not knowing what was done;" so Peter knowing what happened to him, knew her doom, when he heard her tell the same falsehood. In the case of Ananias, Peter did not know his doom when he was committing the sin. In the case of Sapphira, he knew the doom of the sin, but he did not know she would commit it, until he questioned her. Whatever this part of Scripture proves, it does not prove that Peter possessed the power either of remitting or retaining sins.

If the true meaning of our Lord's words be that even the apostles received this power, then as a matter of necessity they must have been qualified to judge of the sincerity of the repentance, and the reality of the faith of those whose sins they remitted. And was this so? The case of Simon the sorcerer, recorded in the 8th chapter of the Acts, is a most satisfactory reply. It is said, "Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done." (Acts viii. 13.) Will it be said that this could have happened if Philip, (whose authority to preach is proved by the working of miracles,) had possessed the power

contended for? Certainly not. It will not do to point to the case of Judas among the twelve, as at all parallel. Our Lord made known, after Judas was externally called, His own knowledge of his real character: "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon." (John vi. 70, 71.) There is no ground for the supposition that a similar knowledge was possessed by Philip in the case of Simon the sorcerer; the evidence is conclusive of the very reverse. Peter and John are sent by the apostles to Samaria, where Philip is, and Simon the sorcerer with him, a professed believer. Do they detect the fraud? The narrative is very instructive. "Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done." (Acts viii. 13.) It is beyond doubt that Simon was admitted by Philip into the membership of the church, and also that he continued with him. "Now, when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost. (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)" (Acts viii. 14—16.) Simon the sorcerer is present, and no objection is made to him by either Peter or John. "Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because

thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God." (Acts viii. 17—21.) Peter knew nothing of the state of Simon's heart until he manifested it by his conduct; and Peter's judgment of Simon was formed just as the judgment one man may form of another in the present day: "by their fruits ye shall know them." Is there a case upon record in the Scriptures, in which Peter could have been more fully warranted in exercising the power of remitting or retaining sin, if he actually possessed it: and what is the fact? Peter counsels Simon to pray to God—"Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee." (Ver. 22.) Why this hesitation on Peter's part to act himself, if he possessed such a power? Peter knew Simon's present state by his conduct,· "For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." (Acts viii. 23.) His not exercising the power claimed for him in these circumstances, makes it abundantly plain that he possessed no such power. But there is a further testimony from Simon the sorcerer himself, whatever interpretation others may put on Peter's procedure: the sense in which Simon understood it cannot admit of question; clearly he did not believe that Peter could remit his sin, for it is written by the inspired penman—"Then answered Simon and said, pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me." (Ver. 24.) In reality Christ alone has the key of the kingdom of heaven. He says so Himself. "These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no

man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth." (Rev. iii. 7.) And it need scarcely be added, that it is God only who can forgive sins. The Jewish church, with all its corruptions at the time of our Lord's appearance upon earth, testified to this truth. There is a most striking contrast between the mode in which our Lord speaks of the forgiveness of sin, and the language invariably used by Peter and all the apostles. "Jesus, seeing their faith, said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. And Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and walk. And he arose, and departed to his house." (Matt. ix. 2—7.) This portion of Scripture furnishes a most complete and conclusive testimony. Our Lord in plain terms declares that He has power to forgive sins. The scribes say within themselves, that for a man to arrogate this power is blasphemy. Christ confirms this truth, by giving a proof of His Divinity, in showing openly His knowledge of what was passing in their hearts. He wrought a miracle of healing to attest His power to forgive sins. It is manifest that the power to forgive sins, can only be associated with the attribute of omniscience—the knowledge of the thoughts of men's hearts; and this is an attribute of Deity Himself, and cannot be possessed or even communicated to man. The knowledge of what is passing in one man's heart, may be revealed by God to

another man, but God only can search the heart of man. There is not one passage in all Scripture to support such a presumptuous interpretation of the passage under review.

There is a more modified sense in which it has been interpreted, that, "Jesus Christ hath given power and commandment to his ministers to declare and pronounce to his people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins." There is no doubt a very material difference between this interpretation and the former. Still it is only a difference of degree; the error is precisely of the same kind in both cases. In the one case the priest dispenses forgiveness himself. In the other case the minister declares that God has absolved. In the one case the priest arrogates the prerogative of Deity. In the other case the minister appears to act, as if he knew the purpose of Deity. I desire to speak with the utmost kindness and tenderness of my christian brethren, many of whom use these words from sabbath to sabbath in their public ministrations. I know they love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. I beseech them to examine this matter prayerfully in God's sight, and judge for themselves. I bear them upon my spirit while I write. I must be faithful. The glory of my Master, their great good, my own accountability, demands this of me. Dear christian brethren, bear then with me. There can be no mistake as to the idea actually conveyed, and intended to be conveyed, to the minds of the worshippers by this part of the form of public worship. It is thus described, "The absolution, or remission of sins, to be pronounced by the priest alone standing: the people still kneeling." It is also a part of the devotional exercise of the sanctuary;

and although it could be said that it was not intended, who can dispute, that the people regard, and really, if there be any sense at all in the ceremony, it cannot but mean that the general confession of the whole congregation having been made immediately preceding, the priest, in virtue of the divine command, declares the absolution and remission of sins. It is no doubt true, that the words, "being penitent," are used to qualify the absoluteness of the declaration. This might remove in part the offensiveness in God's sight; but such an explanation gives to the whole ceremony, the appearance of a solemn trifling with God's worship. If the people, or any number of them, are penitent, it is not the priest who can either absolve or assure them of absolution. Alas! alas! for me, a poor sinner, however grieved and sorrowful because of my sins, if I had no other assurance of forgiveness than man can give upon my profession of penitence. I ask every sincere believer, Is it not the testimony of God's Spirit with your spirit, that gives you the only assurance of absolution or remission of sin? Is it not the peace and the joy which God, by His Spirit works in you, that is the only ground of your confidence that you are forgiven? I ask, if you had not that testimony within yourself, would you be satisfied though all the world declared the contrary? Then, if the Spirit alone can testify the absolution and remission of sins; and if a declaration of remission, pronounced by man, cannot avail without the inward testimony of God's Holy Spirit, why will man intrude himself into Jehovah's province? Where penitence is truly felt, man's help is not needed; where it is not felt, man's help availeth nothing. If this were the true meaning of the ceremony, it could not exist; and, however pain-

ful, the conclusion is unavoidable, that the people are expected to regard the declaration of the priest, as a positive assurance of the remission of their sins. I fear, whatever be the intention, this is the effect produced, and this is the only idea which such a ceremony can convey to an intelligent and thoughtful mind; how much more so to the minds of those, who think little upon any subject. If confirmation be still awanting, the act preceding the declaration of absolution supplies it. If the people had made no public confession of penitence, before the declaration of the remission of sin, the words, "being penitent," might qualify the offensiveness of the act: but the people have already declared themselves penitent by a public confession of their sin, and because of this, and subsequent to this, the priest or minister pronounces absolution. Therefore the words, "being penitent," instead of modifying the absoluteness of the priest's declaration, rather gives peculiar force and efficacy to it; for except the public confession of sin is to be regarded as an idle and unmeaning act, the priest is but following it up by its supposed legitimate effect, and he must take for granted the sincerity of the worshippers; so that these words must be regarded, not as qualifying the declaration of absolution, but as expressive of the people's penitence. Any other interpretation involves the repetition, from sabbath to sabbath, of a sin which I tremble to contemplate. Either the people are sincere, or they are not. Their sincerity leads to one difficulty—the priest's presuming to be a judge of that sincerity, and acting upon it; and further, a judge of God's mind to the particular penitents. "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man, which is in him? even so the things of

God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." (1 Cor. ii. 11.) The people's insincerity leads to another difficulty not less insurmountable. The church has instituted, and is every sabbath-day acting upon, a form in the worship of God which encourages the heinous sin of hyprocisy. If it is not meant, in any sense, to assure even a penitent of his forgiveness, the ceremony should be abolished. If it is meant to assure only the penitent of forgiveness, then not only is such an assurance from man wholly unnecessary, even could he really give it; but it is a trenching upon the high and holy prerogatives of the Divine Being. It is man interposing between God and the soul of another man, and that in a matter regarding which God has explicitly declared, "I am the Lord; that is my name; and my glory I will not give to another; neither my praise to graven images." (Isa. xlii. 8.) And what is idolatry, but the giving to the creature what is due to the Creator.

This implied command is not to be found in the Scriptures. The Mosaic dispensation, in which the priests actually offered the atonements for the sins of the people, is most specially guarded in this respect. The offering of the atonement is the duty of the priest; but he is not commanded to declare the absolution and remission of the sins of those who present the sacrifices. The divine command concerning the great atonement which was to be made once a year for the children of Israel for all their sins, is thus written—"And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: and Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all

their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness." (Lev. xvi. 20, 21.) There is not one word in all this, nor any part of the record of the institution, about the high priest declaring to the people that they were forgiven. Where forgiveness is mentioned in other parts of the Mosaic institutions, it is thus written— "the priest shall make an atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them." (Lev. iv. 20.) Again, "the priest shall make an atonement for him as concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven him." (Lev. iv. 26.) And again, "the priest shall make an atonement for his sins that he hath committed, and it shall be forgiven him." (Lev. iv. 35.) Comment is almost unnecessary. There is not one word about the priest declaring to the man his forgiveness. He is to make an atonement, and God declares by Moses, as the human instrument in founding the Old Testament church, that when atonement is thus made, the sin shall be forgiven. There is a very important transaction recorded in the 9th chapter of Leviticus. After the consecration of Aaron and his sons, Aaron is commanded to make an offering for himself and the people. The reason for the offering is thus given by Moses, "for to-day the Lord will appear unto you." (Lev. ix. 4.) And at the conclusion, "Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out, and blessed the people: and the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the people. And there came a fire out from before the Lord and consumed upon the altar the burnt-offering and the fat; which when all the

people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces." (Lev. ix. 23, 24.) Surely if in any case the word of a man was sufficient to ratify a divine institution, in none could it have been more so than in Moses: but God will not give His glory to another, and what Moses was the human instrument of establishing, must be confirmed by Jehovah Himself. He, and He only, can honour or give efficacy to His own appointment. It was "the Lord commanded Moses in Mount Sinai, in the day he commanded the children of Israel, to offer their oblations unto the Lord, in the wilderness of Sinai." (Lev. vii. 38.) Moses, in obedience to the divine command, told the people. They obeyed the special command to make an offering; and the Lord appeared, thus testifying His approval and confirmation of what Moses had said, and the people had done. How different it would have been to the people of Israel had Moses alone declared, after blessing them, that God had absolved and accepted them.

These transactions were all typical of the gospel dispensation, and the exactness of the representation is truly marvellous. The same Lord comes Himself as the Incarnate God. He declares to Peter—"I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven:" (and, "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink: but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;") (Rom. xiv. 17;) "and whatsoeve rthou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Matt. xvi. 19.) Peter himself interprets this passage: "All flesh is grass, and all the glory of man is as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof fadeth away: but the word of the Lord endureth for

ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." (1 Peter i. 24, 25.) In other words, he says, I am nothing, I am flesh, and flesh is grass; and however much honoured by Jesus, all my glory as a man is as the flower of grass; I must shortly put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shown me; but the word—the word which I have declared unto you, I received from the Lord Jesus, and though heaven and earth may pass away, His word shall not pass away; and that word is, whosoever believeth upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved: neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved: and this is the gospel which is preached unto you. As commanded, Peter and the apostles preached this gospel on the day of pentecost to the assembled multitude. They testified, "that God had made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." And when the hearers said, "Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts ii. 36—38.) There is no appearance here of obedience to a command, or the exercise of a power to declare to God's people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins. On the contrary, Peter, in obedience to his Master's command, declares the grounds upon which God will forgive a sinner, and adds, that God Himself, by the gift of the Holy Ghost, will confirm his word, and assure them of the forgiveness. The case of Moses, of whom it is true, that the Lord gave him the keys of heaven, and the binding and the loosing power

in the Jewish dispensation, is exactly parallel to that of Peter, under the christian dispensation. Just as Moses and the prophets spake with divine authority under the Jewish economy; so Peter and the apostles spake with the same divine authority under the christian economy. What Moses instituted and the prophets taught, God confirmed by supernatural appearances. In like manner, the christian institution, founded by the apostles as the human instruments, and their writings, have been confirmed by similar supernatural appearances. In short, the language of our Lord is figurative, and contains precisely the same truth conveyed in the illustration of the foundation of the house—that the church of God is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. In a general sense, it is true of all the apostles, that to them were given the keys of heaven, and the power of declaring the terms upon which God would forgive sin; with this difference, that the apostles received the word from the Lord Himself, whereas all others have received it through man; not only christian ministers, but all christian believers have the same authority, and are under the same necessity to tell others, that if they believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, they shall be saved. Humanly speaking, there is no more virtue in what is said by a believing minister, than in what is said by the most obscure believer. In either case it is the same word which the apostles preached. In either case it is the same Spirit who can make the word efficacious. In either case the vessel is earthen, and there is no more unction in the words of a minister, because of his being a minister, than there is in the words of the humblest believer. Yea, the more

insignificant the instrument, the more glory is given to God; and the less man in any form is seen or acknowledged in the preaching of the glorious gospel, the more will God be felt and seen, honouring the work of those whose only desire is to win souls to Jesus. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." (Rev. xxii. 17.)

But there is a particular sense in which the keys were given to Peter, and to no other of the apostles. The plural number is used, keys; consequently there is more than one. The idea of opening a door is suggested. The Scriptures very often describe the entrance of the gospel into the hearts of men, as the opening of a door. It may be said truly of Peter, that he opened two doors; and was the first to open both: the keys were in both cases the same, the preaching of the gospel. He was the first to proclaim to the Jews that if they believed on the Lord Jesus Christ they would be saved. He was also the first to proclaim to the Gentiles that if they believed on the Lord Jesus Christ they also would be saved. In both cases, God Himself confirmed Peter's word, by the gift of the Holy Ghost to them who believed. So that actually, in the case of Peter, the keys have been used by him, and "what he bound on earth, has been bound in heaven: what he loosed on earth has been loosed in heaven." There are only two classes or sections of the human family recognised in the Scriptures, Jews and Gentiles. The two-leaved gates of the kingdom of heaven being opened to both by Peter: the use of the keys, and the binding and loosing power in the particular sense, are not needed in the

church, and therefore terminated when he preached the gospel to Cornelius the Roman Centurion, his kinsmen, and near friends, as recorded in the 10th chapter of the Acts. Whoever claims such a power on earth now, must trace it to some other source than that of Peter; and they who are so much concerned to prove their spiritual descent through a long line of spiritual ancestors from the Lord's apostles, might save themselves a world of trouble, if they would look within their own hearts for the Spirit that dwelt in the apostles. Truly the apostles have successors; but they are not priests. The true successors of the apostles, are those, in whose spirit the Spirit of Christ bears witness that they are Christ's; and every such one, without exception, is a successor of the apostles; and all the true worshippers of God, who believe him to be a Spirit, and worship Him in spirit and in truth, are priests unto God, every one, without exception.

CHAPTER VI.

We must now ascend an exceeding high mountain, from the summit of which alone can be obtained a correct view of the origin and the end of God's kingdom; and by the attainment of which, not a little of what is confessedly mysterious in the history of the intermediate dispensation may be in part explained. In one sense, the kingdom of God is already come: in another sense, it is yet to come. Immediately after Satan had usurped God's throne in this world, which he effected by the ruin of our first parents, God re-established His kingdom; the curse pronounced against the serpent contained this important intimation. It is needful to bear in mind the distinction between God's universal kingdom, which includes righteous and wicked intelligences, and God's peculiar kingdom, which is exclusively a kingdom of righteous intelligences, as opposed to the kingdom of wicked intelligences. The government and care of God's peculiar kingdom is committed to His Son, Jesus Christ. Unto the Son, God saith, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." (Heb. i. 8.) Satan rules in the kingdom of wicked intelligences. Since the time of the fall, these two kingdoms have co-existed in this world, and have been arrayed against each other in

perpetual and uncompromising hostility. In this state of warfare, and in this sense only, has the kingdom of God as yet come. It is, however, destined to fill the whole earth, for Christ must reign till he hath put all enemies under His feet; and in this other sense, the kingdom of God is yet to come, with power and great glory.

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." (Rev. i. 8.) The will and purpose of Jehovah, is the only measure, by which man can reach a partial knowledge of the unsearchable ways of God. Of that will and purpose no man can know any thing beyond what God has been pleased to reveal in His written word; but thanks be to God, the Scriptures are able to make wise unto salvation all who search them with faith, humility, and diligence. The same word that reveals to us God's unlimited and uncontrolled sovereignty over all things in this life, makes known to us as clearly and distinctly the existence of a similar sovereignty, in relation to the solemn matters of a coming eternity. I am conscious that I am now approaching the consideration of things into which angels desire to look; things into which many of the excellent of the earth have been afraid to look; things which not a few have rashly ventured to pronounce a judgment upon, not knowing what they say, neither whereof they affirm; things which I approach with much fear and trembling, lest by any means I should transgress the boundary which God has set, and beyond which neither angels nor men dare with impunity pass.

The question now before us is, who are the citizens of God's kingdom, and what are the terms of citizenship?

To both sections of this question the apostle Paul gives a most direct and unequivocal answer. "Whom he (God) did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren." (Rom. viii. 29.) Those descendants of Adam and Eve whom God foreknew and predestinated, are the citizens of the heavenly kingdom. Were this an isolated passage of God's word, it is so distinct and explicit, that it would be impossible to interpret its meaning, except in one way, however disagreeable the truth it contains may appear in the estimation of some. This single passage effectually shuts up every individual who regards the Bible as of divine authority, to a belief in the great and glorious doctrine that God foreknew, and therefore predestinated, all who are citizens of Zion. The passage quoted is not, however, a solitary one; it is one of many which the Bible contains, all of which declare the same great truth. The same apostle writes as follows to the Ephesians:— "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved." (Eph. i. 3—6.) The apostle Peter is not less explicit on this point: "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of

the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter i. 1, 2.)

All discussions about the difficulty which attends the belief of this doctrine, and its alleged tendency, are entirely apart from the question of its truthfulness. If man himself were the framer of his own religious creed, then the mystery in which some of its tenets was enveloped, and their problematical tendency, might be a fair subject of discussion; but when God, the incomprehensible God, is the author of man's faith, and the revealer of the truths upon which it is to be founded, who can dispute the peril and the danger which hang over the individuals who, above and beyond the evidence which God has been pleased to give to convince men that it is He Himself who speaks, demand further, as a condition of their believing Him, that all He says must correspond with the views they entertain of what the Holy and the Just One ought or ought not to do. The desire to understand what God says is one thing, but the refusal to receive and believe what we know God has said, until we do understand it, is a very different thing. To the former God may give greater light; from the latter, except they humble themselves, He may take away the light they possess.

The truth in question, mysterious though it be, is nevertheless the truth of God; yea, it is the most glorious truth in the sacred page: it is thus expressed by the apostle John, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John iv. 10.) I know not a theme of meditation more lofty and sublime, than this truth furnishes to every sincere believer in Jesus Christ. To know and be assured that we are the objects of eternal

and unchanging love; to have this sealed and confirmed to us by a testimony so great as the death of God's own Son, that death being the evidence of its existence in the ages that are past, and the pledge of its endurance throughout the ages to come. They who have within themselves the divine witness that they are the sons and the daughters of God, and who have practically realized their heavenly citizenship, possess in this truth a treasure so incalculably great, that all the riches and the glory of the present world cannot even for a single moment be put into comparison with it. Those who can only view this matter theoretically, may be strangers to that rapturous joy which fills the believing heart when contemplating it; they may complain, but, ah! how unjustly, how unwarrantably, how presumptuously, of the arbitrary character of God's unalterable and irrevocable decree; they may occupy their time and their talents in a fruitless and perilous attempt to explain away, what God has made so plain, that they must be wilfully blind who cannot see it; they may endeavour to console themselves and others with a view of the great origin of the great salvation, something more in harmony with the limited ideas they entertain of the glorious and Holy One. But, after all, the truth remains one and the same; and the glory they have been unwilling to give to God by believing the testimony He has given concerning Himself in this matter, will be ascribed to Him throughout all eternity; for the very truth so rejected is none other than the truth, which shall be the theme of everlasting praise to Him who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." (Rev.

iv. 11.) "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and has redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." (Rev. v. 9, 10.)

But the sword of truth is two-edged; and this very certainty of the salvation of those whom God foreknew, precludes the possibility of the salvation of any others. Let none be startled: this is the legitimate conclusion to which all must come who believe the truth already spoken of. I confess, that to my own mind, this aspect of Divine truth has hitherto always appeared gloomy. In the midst of the joy which the contemplation of God's eternal purpose of love afforded me, my heart has been chilled, and I have been sad and full of trembling, when its opposite truth forced itself upon my consideration. I shall not deny that I have wished, if it were possible, that every being in human form might be made a partaker of the common salvation. The truth, however, cannot be questioned; for the same apostle who was inspired to teach the one, has also by the same Spirit of inspiration taught the other. "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." (2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.) "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness." (1 Cor. i. 18.) "We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us: he that is not of God heareth not us." (1 John iv. 6.) Our Lord Himself teaches this solemn truth: "But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep." (John x. 26.)

And in His last intercessory prayer, He prays thus: "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me: for they are thine." (John xvii. 9.)

The apostle Paul gives a practical illustration of this truth, in the 9th chap. of the Romans, verse 10. "And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac, (for the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth,) it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy upon whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; and that he might make

known the riches of glory on the vessels of mercy which he had afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?" (Rom. ix. 10—24.) In these verses, the inspired apostle details, with great minuteness and singular clearness, the bearing of this important truth in both its aspects. In the 19th verse he states the strongest possible objection which man can make to it; and his reply carries a salutary warning to those, who read or study such portions of Scripture, with no other intention than that of cavilling at what they cannot comprehend. "Who art thou, that repliest against God?"

God has given so many proofs of the perfection of His character, and the excellency of His goodness, as to render wholly inexcusable the conduct of any, who demur to any thing which bears upon it the impress of Divine truth. We walk by faith, not by sight; and is it an unreasonable demand that God should so reveal Himself in some things, as to require our implicit confidence in what He says, just because He has said it; when in so many things, pertaining to our holiness and happiness, He has been pleased to reveal himself in a way suited to the capacity of every mind? May it not be a melancholy proof of our lack of faith in the all-wise God, when in a few things we will not believe His word, because of its being beyond our comprehension? The first great question to settle is, whether God has thus spoken or not? that point settled, no excuse can be urged for hesitating to receive every word which hath proceeded out of the mouth of God; and they who transgress in this respect incur no ordinary guilt in God's sight. We are shut up to the conclusion that by God's sovereign decree, before the foundation of the world, according to

His foreknowledge, He hath predetermined not only the present, but eternal state of the descendants of Adam and Eve; and although the mystery which envelopes this truth was for ever to conceal from our view the cause of God's decree; and although no other reason could be assigned for His purpose than that of His mere good pleasure; still, such is the revelation He has given of His wisdom, His goodness, His love, His mercy, His truth, His faithfulness, His justice, and His holiness, that he justly demands the entire homage of our hearts, and the most perfect submission to His will, in this and in all things; while we adoringly say, "Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight." (Matt. xi. 26.)

Trust in God is the root of the tree of knowledge. Man, when created, needed not to partake of its fruit; therefore his Creator made that tree the test of his obedience. Adam and Eve failed in their allegiance to their Maker, and by partaking of the fruit of that tree, they lost that knowledge of Him which is possessed by holy beings. They failed because they believed not God; and what they forfeited in this respect, can only be regained by man in the exercise of a firm confidence in Jehovah. It is impossible to know God, except we believe in Him; and our knowledge of Him will be in exact proportion to our confidence in Him. "Without faith it is impossible to please God: for he that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Heb. xi. 6.) This confidence which God claims from His people is of a very peculiar kind; it is not that we are to trust Him only to the extent of our experience of His dealings towards ourselves or others, when these are easy of explanation; and cease to confide in Him whenever there is aught in

His procedure mysterious and adverse to us. If we knew the whole mystery of the Divine purpose, we would be walking by sight, not by faith: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Heb. xi. 1.) We must trust God chiefly because of what He is in Himself. Nevertheless, our trust will just be in proportion to our knowledge of what He is. We must rely upon what God has said, simply and entirely because He has said it. Nevertheless, our confidence in what He has said will be in proportion to our knowledge of His faithfulness and truth, as manifested in the ages that are past. "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." (Hab. iii. 17, 18.) However adverse the circumstances of our lot, our faith must not fail. Nevertheless, our faith in such circumstances will just be in proportion to our knowledge of God's dealings with others, and our experience of His dealings with ourselves in times past. The more violent the improbability of what is hoped for, the greater is the trust that still hopes and confides. The more mysterious and inexplicable the truth that is received upon the testimony of God's word, the greater is the faith, the more unwavering the confidence in Jehovah Himself, as the God of truth.

It is only in this spirit of childlike humility and filial confidence that any portion of God's truth can be profitably studied. They who search the Scriptures, desirous of finding in them just as much as will enable them to establish some preconceived notion of their own,

may be allured to think that they have found the object of their search. They who search the Scriptures, desirous of finding in them just as much as will enable them to write or speak down a theory advanced by others, but inconsistent with the view entertained by themselves, may also be allowed to think that they have found the object of their search. It is to be feared, however, that in all such cases the Scriptures are wrested to a lesser or greater extent; and in the heat of theological controversy, and the eagerness for sectarian triumph, the truth of God is roughly, and, alas! sometimes profanely handled by the contending parties: in this matter, many sin and come short of the glory of God. Perhaps, there is no truth of the Bible that has been more unceremoniously treated than the one now under consideration. It is painful to contemplate the scorn it has received at the hands of some, the ridicule with which it has been assailed by others. It is beyond measure grieving to think, that good men themselves, indebted for their present peace, and hopes of future happiness, to the sovreign decree of God, according to His foreknowledge, should, notwithstanding their being living testimonies to this truth, venture even to express a doubt as to its being a doctrine of God. No one can deny that it is a great mystery, and hard to be understood; but it is not a dangerous doctrine, as some people affirm, except to those who wrest it, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction. Its Divine aspect is inaccessible in height; but it has also a human aspect, accessible to man when he believes. To an unbeliever it is a stumbling-block; but the gospel itself is to all such the same. To them that believe, it is the wisdom and the power of God unto salvation. Let a

man be but persuaded in his own mind that Jesus is the Christ and his Almighty Saviour; and then, practically considered, the doctrine of God's electing decree should become the rock of his every hope, the source of his every joy. To those who view it experimentally it presents no practical difficulties. They acknowledge that by the grace of God they are what they are. They feel that an influence from above has quickened them from dead works to serve the living God. They say without hesitation, this is the Lord's doing, it is wondrous in our eyes. Believing their conversion and sanctification to be the work of God, they call to mind the fact, "that known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." (Acts xv. 18.) Therefore they are shut up to the conclusion, that "whom God foreknew, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren." (Rom. viii. 29.)

We now come to consider the two rival kingdoms which have co-existed for nearly six thousand years in this world. On this high subject, men have sought to attain to a wisdom above what is written. If they had not, perhaps they might have ere this gained a more perfect knowledge of what is revealed. God is the Creator of all things. "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." (1 John v. 7.) This passage introduces us to the counsel of the Eternal Godhead, and teaches the same truth which is taught by the apostle Paul at the 29th verse of the 8th chapter of Romans. Before the world was created, the purpose to create it had an existence in the Divine mind. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

(Gen. i. 1.) It is particularly worthy of notice, that in the gospel according to John, the creation of all things is ascribed to the Word, the second person in the Godhead:—"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." (John i. 1—3.) The apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Hebrews, is guided by the Spirit of God to inform us that God hath appointed his Son heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds. (Heb. i. 2.) This passage conveys the idea, that the creation of this world was not only by the Son, but for the Son, "he being appointed heir of all things." Our Saviour himself says, "all things that the Father hath are mine." (John xvi. 15.) John the baptist's testimony is, that "the Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand." (John. iii. 35.) The conclusion is legitimate, that God, having created all things by the Son, and for the Son, He committed all things to the care and government of the Son. What was created by Him and for Him, was rightfully placed under His dominion; and this world, being among the all things, so created by and for the Son, is His kingdom, and He is its true and only King. There is great significance in the name given to the Son. He is called the Word of God, "being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power." (Heb. i. 3.) No man hath seen the Father at any time, the only begotten He hath declared Him. The mystery of the relation between the Father and the Son passeth all understanding. The fact of the relationship is fully revealed:—"Thou art

my Son, this day have I begotten thee." (Psalms ii. 7.) The nature of the relationship between a father and a son, man knows upon earth: it is the nature of God that makes the nature of the relationship between God the Father and God the Son an incomprehensible mystery. Nevertheless, God saith, "I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son." (Heb. i. 5.)

"When he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him." (Heb. i. 6.) This passage may have a reference to the time when Jesus was born of Mary; but that can scarcely be the whole application of the passage, for the command is so given as to imply, that the angels had not known Him as the object of worship before. Our Lord's assumption of humanity, as an act by itself, does not seem to be one which would originate a command to worship Him, if He had not been the object of worship previously. The completion of the work for the accomplishment of which He was manifest in the flesh, is such a work as gives to the angels a new motive to praise and adore the Son, and this truth is expressly revealed: "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." (Rev. v. 11, 12.) The command to the angels to worship the Son can have no possible reference to his actual being, because as God, He is the Only Begotten of the Father, the Eternal Son of God; and in relation to all things else, He is the first begotten of God. He declares of Himself, "I was set

up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled; before the hills was I brought forth." (Prov. viii. 23—25.) It is more than probable, (to my own mind it has all the force of an indubitable certainty,) that this command was given to the angels when the Father commissioned the Son, in accordance with the pre-determined counsel of the Godhead, to create the heaven and the earth; so that when the Father thus revealed the Son, it may with truth be said, He brought the first-begotten into the world. The Lord's answer to Job plainly teaches this truth: "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" (Job xxxviii. 2—7.) The laying of the foundations of the earth is referred to in this passage, and at that time there were no human beings in existence, so that the sons of God cannot apply to any but the angels.

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." (Gen. i. 26.) To speak after the manner of men, the Godhead took counsel together, when God purposed to create man. The

divine record of this transaction is all-important and most instructive. It conveys to the mind the idea that the being and destiny of man was the subject of divine counsel: that not only was his probationary state and habitation fully determined, but also his final and eternal destiny. As regards Jehovah Himself, He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. The manifest design of such a record of the divine procedure is to instruct men, that God has a fixed and unalterable purpose in relation to them, gradually developing, in strict and unvarying accordance with the counsel and foreknowledge of the eternal Godhead. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him: male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." (Gen. i. 27, 28.) It cannot be questioned, that when God created Adam and Eve, and made them living souls, He in them created all whom He purposed should inhabit this world, for in them was the seed of human life. Viewed in this light, how wondrous beyond all imagination is the display of Divine wisdom and power, disclosed to us in the creation of mankind. If God may be said thus to have in fact created all mankind when He gave being to Adam and Eve; it is then equally certain, that the precise number who were to descend from them was also predetermined and unalterably fixed. When God said, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth," He foreknew and predetermined the whole human family, every individual without one solitary exception. It is added, "And God saw every thing that

he had made, and, behold, it was very good." (Gen. i. 31.) This expression of the divine approbation having reference to Adam and Eve in particular, included in them, all to whom God purposed to give life through their instrumentality; so that this passage must be regarded as embracing the whole period of man's probationary state.

Let me entreat all who demur to the doctrine of God's electing decree to view it at this stage of the world's history, and unless they are determined not to know the truth, I am confident that, by the guidance of God's Spirit, they will be brought to see that what they have hesitated to receive, fearful of its tendency, is a truth, which represents the character and procedure of God in a light the most glorious. That it is a truth, the full belief of which, and its proper application by divine grace, will awaken in the soul a source of joy and praise, the ever-increasing streams flowing from which, will swell the acclamations and hallelujahs of a coming eternity. I ask, was it an arbitrary procedure in Jehovah, to decree with unalterable purpose, that all whom He created in Adam, and whom He loved with everlasting love, should inherit that kingdom, and that glory, for which He created them? Was it an unreasonable act, on the part of the only wise God, to predestinate every one of His own children, whom He foreknew, to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren? This high and holy purpose of Jehovah was kept a mystery from man, and probably from angels, until God was manifest in the flesh. After our Lord's ascension to glory, His apostles were inspired, "to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by

Jesus Christ: to the intent that now, unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Eph. iii. 9—11.) Will any believer in Christ, viewing this truth at that stage of the world's history at which its Creator saw every thing which He had made, and pronounced it very good, say, that the glorious and holy One acted unlike Himself, when He purposed, in the counsel of His own will, that every part of that fair and beauteous creation, to which He gave existence, should without fail attain to that mark of unspeakable glory to which He destined it, when it came new from His hands? Oh! shall it be said by a child of God, that his heavenly Father's eternal purpose to give him eternal life through His Son, coupled with the assurance that none shall pluck him out of His hand, is a dangerous truth, and an exercise of the divine prerogative, to the equity of which he is not prepared to give his fullest and most unqualified assent? Will not every believer on earth rather join with the saints in heaven, and unite with the elect angels, having one heart, and with one voice worship and adore, saying, in the language of the inspired apostle, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved." (Eph. i. 3—6.)

God hath said "Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me; declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, my counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." (Isaiah xlvi. 9, 10.) What a cheering and heart-stirring reflection it is, when surveying what in our ignorance we are prone to designate the wreck and ruin of God's creation, to hear the Lord address us thus: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither again, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void: but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." (Isaiah lv. 8—11.) Thanks be to God, "we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth."

The existence of Satan, the great adversary of God and man, must be admitted on all hands. The time of his creation is not revealed, but it is clearly intimated in Scripture that his first estate was sinless. The time of his fall is obscurely made known; and the fact of his having sinned and being cast down to hell, is distinctly stated. A careful consideration of the written word, impresses me with the persuasion, that when created he was the first of angels, and occupied a position of great prominence among the angelic hosts. Probably he was

their great leader, through whom God signified His high commands, to His intelligent offspring. At the appointed time, "God bringeth His first begotten Son into the world, and saith, Let all the angels of God worship him." (Heb. i. 6.) It would appear that Satan regarded this announcement as the introduction of a rival to himself, and refused obedience to the will of his Creator; thus, he, and those other angels who sinned with him in this matter, fell from their high estate, and arrayed themselves in an attitude of hostility to the government of Jehovah, as from thence committed to His only and well-beloved Son. Thus we have the two contending armies in the field of conflict, in the angelic world: Satan and the fallen angels opposing themselves to the Son and the elect angels. The heaven and the earth being created by the Son; and the Father having revealed the Son to the angels, when the time was fully come for the accomplishment of the Divine purpose: it is exceedingly probable, that at every stage of His great work, the Son encountered the hostility of Satan. The Mosaic history of the creation contains one sentence which is repeated five times: "and God saw that it was good;" and the concluding sentence is—"God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold it was very good." God's own character was a sufficient guarantee that all He had done was very good, so that the record thus given may be intended as a contrast with the evil co-existing at the time of creation; and further, and perhaps chiefly as an intimation that Satan's opposition to the Son had failed in producing one spot or blemish in any of the works of creation. The contest was probably a long one—at least a period of six thousand years, from the time that "God said let there be light," until

man became a living soul; so that when Satan assailed Eve in the garden of Eden, he made his assault with all the skill and subtlety of a practised and experienced antagonist.

Defeated up till this point in his opposition to the Son of God, Satan's last effort to destroy His work is made in the temptation of Eve. He succeeded in seducing our first parents; they yielded to his temptation, disbelieved and disobeyed God, and by their transgression were placed under the same condemnation with Satan himself. The space of time that elapsed between the transgression and God's confronting the transgressors, must have been one of great suspense to all created intelligences. What had happened to the angels when they sinned, would be regarded as the doom of mankind. It may be well to examine this transaction in respect of the light which it throws upon the sin by which Satan himself fell. There was a twofold influence set to work in Eve's mind, producing at one and the same time, unbelief and pride, and these resulting in the open act of disobedience: from this fact it may be fairly inferred, that unbelief and pride, in Satan's own case, occasioned his refusal to worship God's own Son when He brought Him into the world. He would not honour the Son, as he honoured the Father.

God appears, and after questioning Adam and Eve, proceeds to unfold the outline of His purpose to this world in its altered circumstances. He addresses Satan first, who had, through the instrumentality of the serpent, beguiled and seduced Eve. "And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field: upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all

the days of thy life: and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." (Gen. iii. 14, 15.) Although this curse has been literally fulfilled in the serpent, no one can dispute that Satan is the old serpent who is actually spoken to, and spoken of, by God. The fall had placed the woman at enmity with God, so that Satan and her occupied precisely the same position; but God says, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman." These words contain a distinct assurance that one of the parties shall be restored to God's favour; and Satan being the seducer, and the party against whom God is pronouncing the curse, the assurance of restoration is only applicable to the woman. "I will put enmity between thy seed and her seed." Great and important is the truth which God has revealed in these words. To limit the application of the words, "her seed," to Christ's person, or human nature, in which He appeared on earth, destroys the true meaning of the passage. Our Lord is specially referred to in the words that follow: "it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." So that any reason that may exist for so limiting the previous sentence, is thus answered. "Her seed," embraces every individual who would have descended from our first parents by ordinary generation, in fulfilment of God's purpose, when "He blessed them, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth:" and the plain interpretation of the words is, that all the seed of the woman, as well as herself, shall be restored to God's favour. This is an announcement to Satan that his purpose has failed, and that God's counsel shall stand. The words used are not, "I will put enmity between thee and her seed:" but the

words are, "between thy seed and her seed." It is remarkable that in the first and last sentences of this passage, where the woman and the Lord Jesus are specially referred to, Satan himself is alone spoken of. In the middle sentence, where the seed of the woman is introduced, the seed of Satan, or the serpent, is also introduced. What is meant by the seed of the serpent? It cannot be said that these words find their full signification in that enmity which exists between the seed of the serpent, as reptiles of the earth, and the descendants of the woman. It will not do to interpret this sentence by a rule different from the other two with which it is conjoined, and between which it is positively the connecting link. If, in the cases where Christ and the woman are referred to, an intelligent being is placed in juxtaposition with them, under the figure of a serpent; then it follows as a matter of certainty that intelligent beings must also be represented under the figure of the seed of the serpent, as at enmity with intelligent beings represented under the figure of the seed of the woman.

Our Lord Himself gives a very full and satisfactory exposition of this mysterious passage—"Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way." (Matt. xiii. 24, 25.) Before alluding to our Lord's own interpretation of these words, there are two things worthy of special observation. The parable of the tares is preceded by a narration of the parable of the sower, who went forth to sow; our Lord's explanation of which proves it to be an illustration of the peculiarities attending the preaching of the word under the gospel dispensation.

It is, therefore, improbable, that the parable of the tares is meant to have any particular reference to the gospel dispensation. The inspired evangelist, immediately preceding his narration of our Lord's explanation of the parable of the tares, writes thus: "All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world." (Matt. xiii. 34, 35.) The explanation of the parable follows, and it is the only one of three, all recorded together, that is explained; and it can scarcely be disputed that the things uttered, which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world, are those things referred to in this parable, so that Eden may be regarded as the scene of those transactions revealed in its opening words—"Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house; and his disciples came unto him, saying, declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; the field is the world; the the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil." (Matt. xiii. 36—39.) This passage requires no comment, and it is the best possible commentary upon the words now under consideration. Our Lord plainly declares, that He has brought into being a race of men whom he calls the good seed, the children of the kingdom. He speaks of the devil as his enemy, and as the father of the tares, whom Christ designates the children of the wicked one.

If all that fell in Adam are to be restored in Christ,

for as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive; (1 Cor. xv. 22;) some may be ready to inquire, how can these things be? The great power of Satan has already been alluded to; we must now, however, go somewhat into its proof from Scripture. In regard to this earth and its affairs, the terms in which he is spoken of prove him to be permitted by God, because of the wickedness abounding, to exercise a power and sovereignty only fettered by God's original purpose in regard to His own children. All he does is made entirely subservient to God's will in this matter; so that, while he sits upon a usurped throne, and reigns as sovereign, he is unconsciously and unwillingly the instrument of fulfilling, in every particular, the whole of God's counsel. He is compared to a strong man armed keeping his palace and his goods at peace. He is called the prince of this world, the god of the earth, the prince of the power of the air. He is said to have the power of death. God's people are specially warned against speaking lightly of him, as well as cautioned to be on their guard against him. He goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." (Luke xxii. 31, 32.) The apostle Paul thus writes unto the Ephesians: "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Eph. vi. 11, 12.) In the spiritual world there is only Michael, the first prince, the great prince, who,

with his angels, ultimately prevails against Satan and his angels; and the probability is, that the power of the Messiah, the Prince of life, is meant. This description of his great power and authority in this world, since the introduction of sin to it, should prepare our minds for a corresponding manifestation of it in the history of our race. He has contended with the Son of God for thousands of years. That one fact testifies him to possess a nature higher, in point of intellect and power, than any other created intelligence. That must be, beyond question, a great mind, that has carried on such a course of varied and unceasing opposition to the will of the Almighty; and the purposes of that mind must have been supported by a power not less wonderful than the wisdom that planned them.

The sin of our first parents gave Satan a permissive power over their bodies and natural lives, while they remained upon the earth; so that every descendant from them would be in his image, and would for ever have continued so, but for God's electing decree in favour of His own children, the seed of the woman. Let us now consider what God said to the woman, and, in the words uttered, we shall get a solution of the great mystery. They will explain to us how it is that every soul descending from Adam and Eve, in virtue of God's purpose, when He blessed them, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, shall be saved; and, at the same time, a race of wicked men be at last consigned, with the devil and his angels, to that state, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

"Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception: in sorrow shalt thou bring

forth children." (Gen. iii. 16.) Be silent, O man, and marvel at the wisdom and the power of God herein displayed. The woman's doom is, that in sorrow she is to bring forth her own seed which God originally gave her. This, however, is only one portion of the painful consequences of her disobedience; because of her sin, her conception is to be multiplied; she is to bring forth in sorrow the seed of that serpent who beguiled her when she did eat. How wise, how just, how holy the purpose of God thus revealed. By multiplying the woman's conception, God multiplies her sorrow because of her transgression; while that very increase is the result of Satan's success in seducing Eve, these being the tares which he planted among the wheat. Satan himself, whose offspring they are, and these his wicked children, are actually made the instruments of preparing this earth to become again the abode of holy and glorified saints; and also the instruments, in God's hand, of preparing His children, by suffering, for the glory that awaits them.

The first two men born into the world, represent the two sections into which mankind is divided. Cain, the first-born, being the child of the devil—Abel his brother being the child of God. "In process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering: but unto Cain, and to his offering, he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell." . . . . "And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him. And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he

said, I know not. Am I my brother's keeper?" (Gen. iv. 3—5, 8, 9.) The apostle John illustrates this great truth in his first Epistle. "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous." (1 John iii. 8—12.)

"And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew." (Gen. iv. 25.) It would appear that for a time after the fall the two races were kept distinct in the earth. The descendants of Cain are given in one genealogy, and the descendants of Seth in another. The former are called men by the inspired historian, the latter are called the sons of God; and not until the sons of God took them wives of the daughters of men was the distinction obliterated. After the flood, the rule seems to be that they grow up together in the same families; Isaac and Ishmael in the family of Abraham; Jacob and Esau in the family of Isaac. It was true, under the Jewish dispensation, that the tribes of Israel were a mixture of good and evil. When John the Baptist came preaching repentance, the seed of the serpent was then

numerous in the land of Judea. "When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" (Matt. iii. 7.)

Our Lord Himself bears repeated testimony to the great truth, that there are two distinct races of men in this world, different in their origin, and different in their destiny. "Jesus answered them, ... I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, if ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they unto him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do: he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not." (John viii. 34, 38—45.) Again: "Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me: but ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep. As I said unto you, My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life: and they

shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me, is greater than all: and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one." (John x. 25—30.) "Jesus answered them, Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, he being one of the twelve." (John vi. 70, 71.) "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matt. vii. 21—23.) How glorious this truth! God loved His own from the beginning, and He will never cease to love them. The children of the wicked one never were His; therefore, in the end, He will say unto them, in strict and literal truth, "I never knew you; depart from me."

This all important truth is one of the great arteries of Divine revelation. It is well attested by innumerable passages of Scripture, and it throws a flood of light upon many parts of the written word, otherwise hard to be understood. In the Epistle to the Romans it is thus written: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." (Rom.

v. 12, 18.) These two verses refer exclusively to every descendant of Adam, in virtue of God's blessing him, and saying, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth;" to all whom God created in Adam. These alone fell with Adam in his transgressions. The apostle removes all doubt upon this point in the next verse, when he says, "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners;" this is a change in the mode of expression; in the former case the word all is used, and it can have but one signification, every one without exception: in the present instance the word many is used, which must mean, not all, but a portion. It is to be observed, however, that in both cases the final destiny of the parties referred to is the same: the "all men are justified by the righteousness of Christ," "so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." (Rom. v. 19.) The apostle's meaning cannot be mistaken. He teaches that the effect of Adam's transgression is entirely removed, by the righteousness of Christ, from every individual whom Adam represented when he disobeyed. They who sinned in Adam are saved by Christ. "For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." Meditate upon these passages in the light of the great truth we have been considering, and the language of the apostle, otherwise obscure, becomes clear and intelligible. In the 12th and 18th verses he speaks of the seed of the woman alone, without reference to any other. In the 19th verse he speaks of the same seed, but as being many, mingled in this state of being with the seed of the serpent.

Take one other portion of Scripture:—"And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for

our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 John ii. 1, 2.) The whole world, in this passage, are the all spoken of by the apostle Paul—the seed of the woman. The apostle John illustrates this himself, when he says, "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not: but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. And we know that we are born of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness," (or the wicked one.) (1 John v. 18, 19.) The whole world, in the first passage, being the seed of the woman, begotten of God. The whole world, in the last passage, being the seed of the serpent, distinct from the seed of the woman, and contrasted with it. The one begotten of God, the other lying in the wicked one.

CHAPTER VII.

Our path is a lofty and a narrow one. Every step we advance opens up to our view more and more of the hidden treasures and unfathomable mines of divine truth. What we now know is the stepping stone to what we may yet discover, if we follow on to know the Lord. Before proceeding further, it is needful that each be fully persuaded in his own mind of the truth of what is already written; because, further inquiry will only be beneficial to those who go forward in faith. They who hear and believe, being like unto the man who builds his house upon the rock. They who hear and believe not, being like unto the man who builds his house upon the sand.

It is not improbable that some who may be constrained to acknowledge that the contents of the preceding chapter are strictly in accordance with the word of God, may, nevertheless, be tempted to employ themselves in searching for new difficulties, to supplant those dislodged from their minds, instead of humbly adoring the great Jehovah, whose works are so unsearchable, and whose ways are past finding out. To such I would say, give up at once and for ever a mental employment so dishonouring to God and injurious to yourselves. Cease from criticising that, regarding which you are

utterly incompetent to pronounce judgment upon. "Wo unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, he hath no hands."

God has given a written revelation of Himself, so full, so perfect, and so complete, as to render wholly inexcusable the man who will not believe it. What He has said concerning Himself, is clearly and distinctly stated. It is supported by an amount of testimony altogether overwhelming. It reveals a knowledge which has a breadth, and length, and depth, and height, that passeth all understanding. Man is himself wonderfully interesting. The world in which he dwells, possesses myriads of objects calculated to excite wonder and amazement. This earth, with its continual round of mutation, is of itself an exhaustless field of inquiry, and presents to the mind of the diligent student many a mystery so hopelessly inexplicable, that, but for the unquestionable testimony of his senses to their existence, belief in them would be impossible. Within the body of a single man, there dwells a nature, compared with which, the whole world of matter is less than nothing. The soul of man, to himself, possesses a value beyond all calculation; "for what should a man be profited, if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul." The being of the man is a profound mystery to himself. No one has as yet been able to unravel and explain it. There is something truly solemnizing in the contemplation of one's self. I, a thinking being, possessing faculties, divine in their origin, and endless in their duration; living, and to live for ever, in the active exercise of those mental

powers with which I am endowed. To myself, my very existence passes knowledge; and as to the eternity that awaits me, "eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man to conceive what God hath prepared for him that waiteth for him." If one soul presents to itself a difficulty so great, how incomprehensible must be the mystery which envelopes the existence and destiny of the whole world of human beings. Every man must confess his incompetency of himself to pronounce any opinion in relation to these matters, although they belong to himself, and to those of his own species. Surpassingly wondrous though all this be, what are all the inhabitants of this earth, as compared with God:—"Behold the nations are as a drop of the bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance." (Isa. xl. 15.) "All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing and vanity." (Isa. xl. 17.)

It is most unwise in a man, with a knowledge of these circumstances, to think of God, either as revealed in His word or works, in the spirit of a critic. Prayer without ceasing, deepest humility, reverential awe, a mind stayed on God, and filled with the Holy Spirit, can alone be blessed in striving to attain a more perfect knowledge of the great Creator. To such the door is wide open, and no man can shut it. The word of God is a lamp unto their feet, and a light unto their path; and they will shine more and more unto the perfect day.

I should rejoice greatly if made instrumental in removing from the minds of any of my fellow beings, those hard thoughts which many cherish in their hearts towards God, unconsious of the injury they inflict upon

themselves. I know nothing of God compared with what I shall yet know, and all that I can ever know of Him, will be as far beneath His glory, as the finite is beneath the infinite: but of this I am confident, the progressive increase of my knowledge shall never terminate. Oh! blessed and transporting thought; the mysteries, the growing knowledge of which is a continual feast to my soul; these mysteries are but the germs of a wisdom, the treasures of which are inexhaustible. I am but launching the bark of my immortal soul upon that boundless ocean of divine glory; the waters of which shall refresh, invigorate, and inspire my every faculty with a divine energy, and shall flow out again from a heart burning with fire, and overflowing with love, in strains of endless praise and holy adoration to Him who is above all praise; of whom, when I think, my heart is like to burst, because I cannot speak of Him as I would wish; my tongue, and my pen, seem to mock the fervour of my soul, by the insignificance of the accents and sentences they utter, compared with the heaven-born raptures they are intended to express. Oh! I cannot honour Him; I cannot love Him; I cannot imagine the homage which I desire to render a being so transcendently glorious. Oh! that I could concentrate in one act of my nature a tribute of worship, and reverence, and praise, in some measure proportionate to what I even now know of the wonders of His love, and the marvels of His wisdom. Oh! my God, what will I do? Come, Oh! come, and strengthen a human heart, and fill it with a seraph's fire, to declare that which cannot be declared, to feel that which cannot be felt, to ascribe that which cannot be ascribed; where shall I find relief? what shall compensate for the utter

inadequacy of my nature to fulfil the desire of my heart? Oh! glory to thy great and holy name, thou hast made even in this respect a gracious provision: what thou knowest I cannot do in one or in many acts of homage to thee, my God, and Strength, and King, thou hast said I shall be permitted, and encouraged, and enabled to do throughout eternity. In this confidence, Lord, my soul shall rest in the hope of endlessly glorifying thee, by ascribing "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever."

The being of God is itself a sufficient reply to every one who objects to what is revealed to us of His ways. "Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out." Is it common among men to judge a matter without a full knowledge of what is judged? Would it be reckoned wise in a man to pass judgment upon the procedure of another man, when in ignorance of the facts upon which a righteous judgment could alone be formed? How much more unwise to deal thus with a revelation from God, when it is impossible, even by searching, to find Him out. It may be mysterious in the estimation of some, that God should have permitted Satan to exercise the power he unquestionably possesses. Not content with expressing their surprise at the existence of such a mystery, they may venture somewhat farther, and all but dare to question its equity; and in doing so, arraign the Heavenly Majesty at the tribunal of an earthly worm. Reasoning after the manner of sinful men, they may, without any wilful intention on their part, be the instruments of him who is emphatically called the Accuser of the brethren, and become the accusers of God. There is no limit to a man's course if he once

rush away from God, and despise His word. The only safety of men consists in a firm reliance upon God: not only receiving and believing all He has said concerning Himself, but also the presenting of their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is their reasonable service. "Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." (Rom. xii. 2.) When man can explain the mystery of Jehovah's existence; when he can search through the past ages of eternity, and trace with unerring precision the evolutions of the mighty purposes of the Infinite and Eternal Mind; when he can show the bearing which these have upon that glorious plan of the same Infinite Mind, now so far in process of development and fulfilment, within the compass of his limited observation; when he can show the effect which this very scheme produces upon other created intelligences, of whose existence he is equally as ingnorant as he is of their relation to this matter in God's purpose; when he can unfold the secrets of a coming eternity, tell what countless myriads of intelligent beings are yet destined to be called into existence, by the creative fiat of Jehovah; when he can show the effect which the great mystery of godliness, now in operation in this world, is to produce upon all beings for ever and ever; in short, when the Eternal, the Infinite, and Holy One, ceases to be such; when man, at present so helpless, and comparatively ignorant, becomes the equal of his great Creator; then, without presumption, and without peril, and without exceeding great guilt, he may venture to propose to his maker the question, What doest thou? and failing what he esteems

a satisfactory answer, he may reply against his God. Be counselled all ye who act so unwisely; contend not with God, the strife is unequal, the issue is certain. Rather return unto thy God, and, clothed and in thy right mind, take thy seat at the foot of that wondrous cross, and pray Him who suffered upon it, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, to open your understandings, that you may understand the Scriptures.

That which is forbidden to a doubting mind—that which would be extremely perilous to a captious spirit—is the commanded duty of every believing heart. "Search the Scriptures," is the Saviour's exhortation to every man. There are some things in Scripture hard to be understood, but growth in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, is only attainable through the written word; for the Scriptures alone testify of Jesus as the Redeemer of the world. When men search the sacred record, in the full faith of its divine origin in every part; when they limit themselves in all their conclusions to what is therein revealed, seeking not to be wise above what is written; when they are not only content, but have joy in believing and adoring a wisdom and a knowledge they cannot understand; when their only motive for desiring greater light is that they may out of the fulness of an enraptured soul give more glory to God themselves, and be better qualified to make known the unsearchable riches of His wisdom and knowledge to others; when in this spirit, relying upon the promise of the influence of the Holy Spirit from above to enlighten the mind and interpret what is studied, men search the Scriptures, they will find in them hidden treasures, in comparison with which all

other knowledge, of whatever kind, is but vanity and vexation of spirit. Men are destined to know inconceivably more of God, even in this life, than they now know —God is to appear in His glory when He shall build up Zion. The Scriptures contain a full and complete revelation of that glory; so that, when the veil is removed, which now conceals it in the sacred page, "the heathen shall fear the name of the Lord, and all kings of the earth his glory."

The apostle Paul writes thus, in his second epistle to the Corinthians: "I knew a man in Christ, above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth,) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth,) how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities." (2 Cor. xii. 2—5.) Does the inspired apostle speak in these verses of himself, or of some other? clearly of some other; else, why institute the comparison in the 5th verse, between himself and that man whom he knew in Christ? This is a parallel passage to the one in the Revelation, in which it is said, "When the angel had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not." (Rev. x. 3, 4.) In both instances the things uttered and heard were unspeakable; and both apostles were prohibited from declaring what was revealed to them. The apostle Paul

adds, "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan, to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure." (2 Cor. xii. 7.) And the apostle John writes, "I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up: and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter." (Rev. x. 10.) Each of these verses is corroborative and explanatory of the other. The probability is very great that both apostles saw and heard the same things, perhaps represented under different figures; but the revelation in both cases having reference to the same events, and the same time of the world's history.

The same occurrence is again introduced in the Revelation under a different figure. "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: and she, being with child, cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And she brought forth a man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne." (Rev. xii. 1, 2, 5.) The latter clause of the 5th verse evidently refers to the same transaction recorded by the apostle Paul, previously quoted. The man in Christ whom Paul knew was caught up to the third heaven. The man-child was caught up unto God. The man in Christ whom Paul knew was caught up into paradise. The man-child was caught up to God's throne. In both cases the same truth is taught; and without controversy, it is a very limited and safe interpretation of these passages to say, that they encourage the hope that a time is coming when

God will demonstrate how great is the capacity of the human mind, when under divine influence and guidance it strives to know God and His glory, as revealed in the written word. "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man: that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith: that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." (Eph. iii. 14—19.)

There is one God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one. We know nothing of the great Jehovah, beyond what He is pleased to reveal concerning himself. We know nothing of his works, beyond what is seen and felt by men, or made known in His word. All speculation about the actual bounds of what He has created, either of intellect or matter, is useless and unprofitable. How many more worlds are in existence? what their uses? how, if at all inhabited? are all questions to which no satisfactory answer can be given; and to spend time in surmising these things is scarcely warrantable. God has, in his abundant mercy, revealed to us far more than we shall ever be able to exhaust or comprehend concerning our own world, and the intelligences and things connected therewith; and to that revelation let us now apply ourselves in a spirit of deepest humility, and most earnest but prayerful and believing inquiry.

There was a period, however remote in the ages of

eternity, when no portion of the created intelligences or things whose existence the Bible records had a being. We know that there are two orders of created intelligences—angels and men; and all we know of either warrants no other conclusion than that the interests and destinies of both angels and men are closely indentified with the history of one and the same system of God's creation. The angels are first introduced to the notice of the Scripture student when the Father bringeth in the first-begotten into the world. From that period down to the end of time, elect and fallen angels are represented in Scripture as actively engaged, and deeply concerned, in the result of the mighty struggle that has been, and is still carried on in this world. At the last day a final separation will be made between the righteous and the wicked, among angels and men. Holy angels and redeemed men shall dwell for ever together with the Lamb. Fallen angels and wicked men shall dwell for ever with the wicked one.

God is immutable in His nature and character; "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." (Heb. xiii. 8.) "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness?" (Ex. xv. 11.) "Thus saith the high and the lofty one that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy." (Isa. lvii. 15.) "He is a God of truth, and without iniquity." (Deut. xxxii. 4.) "Art thou not from everlasting, O Lord my God, mine Holy One? . . . . Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity." (Hab. i. 12, 13.) These are the things which Jehovah has declared concerning Himself. He is a God of truth; a God of holiness; He is from everlasting to everlasting, and changeth not. Beginning with the first intelligence

God created in this world of being, down to the creation of Adam and Eve, and their descendants in them, the Scripture testifies that all that He had made was very good. Satan's creation as an angel of light, and the creation of every one of the angelic host, must have been, cannot have been, any thing else than a perfect work of the all-perfect Jehovah, and, like Himself, holy. Upon this point there is not room for the shadow of a doubt, and he who believes in God as a God of truth and holiness, must also believe that every being and every thing He has created must have been holy at the time of their creation. Moreover, it is just as certain and incontrovertible, that God could not, and never did, tempt any one of His creatures to sin; yea, it is indisputable, that not only did God make them holy, but it is further revealed, that "His commandments are not grievous." (1 John v. 3.) "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man." (James i. 13.)

Jehovah further declares of Himself, "I am the Almighty God." (Gen. xvii. 1.) And the wisdom of God is manifold. (Eph. iii. 10.) Power omnipotent, and wisdom manifold, have no limits in their exercise but the will of Him whose glorious attributes they are; therefore it is not possible to imagine the greatness of that power and wisdom with which God as the Creator can endow an intelligent creature. There are principalities, and powers, and might, and dominion, among the angels. Satan has no compeer. As a created being, he is first in point of intellectual greatness; and what must be the height of Him who is the highest in created power. They who dispute this not only oppose themselves to the whole scope of the written word, but they actually contend

with the evidence of their senses, every thing around them bearing testimony to Satan's terrible power. God's plan of dealing with the angels is in no respect different from his mode of dealing with men. They only know God in so far as He is pleased to reveal Himself. From them, as well as from men, is hid the mystery of God's purpose; and they cannot know it until revealed by Himself in His own time. The apostle Paul says he received grace "to make all (men) see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Eph. iii. 9—11.) Also the apostle Peter writes thus: "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us, they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into." (1 Peter i. 10—12.) In both these passages, angels are represented as ignorant of God's purpose until its manifestation among men. The very nature of a created intelligence is such that however great his capacity and power, still all he knows must be communicated. There must be system and method in imparting knowledge. The faculties must be kept in

active and vigorous exercise in the acquiring of knowledge. Time and experience are both essential to the accomplishment of this object. We know so much of God, as revealed in the Bible, as teaches us the important truth, that all the doings of Jehovah among the children of men have been most instructive lessons to angels; and when the end comes, we know the only difference between the song of angels and the song of redeemed men will be, that the former will cry, "Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing:" and the latter will sing, saying, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation: and hast made us unto our God, kings and priests." (Rev. v. 9—12.)

"When the Father bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him." (Heb. i. 6.) The period when this event occurred was a most important epoch in the world's history. It was a further glorious manifestation of the Divine nature. Angels had hitherto known Jehovah as their Creator and their God; but the mystery of that nature, in relation to the three persons subsisting in the one God, they knew not. The Father declared, in a manner suited to the apprehension of His intelligent offspring, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son." (Heb. i. 5.) God's laying the foundations of the earth, is coeval with His bringing the first-begotten into the world, for He says, "Who laid the corner stone thereof, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" (Job xxxviii. 7.) We know

that Jesus Christ is the chief corner stone of God's temple. And what is God's temple? nothing less than His whole works, for He filleth all in all. It is written, "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner." (Psalm cxviii. 22.) This passage our Lord applies to Himself; so do the apostles apply it to Him. Such an occurrence as that described, may have taken place at the building of Solomon's temple; and no doubt it was strictly fulfilled as a prediction, when the Jews rejected the Redeemer; but its true and original application, as a matter of history, when the Psalms were written, is the time when God laid the foundations of the earth; then in reality occurred that event which the psalmist records, for the builders refused the stone, which God appointed as the head of the corner.

Of Satan's original innocence and excellence there cannot be a doubt. He is the offspring of God, and as such could not but be created in the divine image, a holy being. The testimony of Christ is clear and conclusive upon this point. Jesus said, "Ye are of your father the devil . . . he . . . abode not in the truth." (John viii. 44.) Concerning the other angels who fell with him, the Scripture testimony is equally explicit; they are described as "the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation." (Jude 6.) The sin which they committed is not less clearly revealed. Our Lord says: "The devil is a liar, and the father of it." (John viii. 44.) The apostle John writes thus: "Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?" (1 John ii. 22.) The idea conveyed in this passage is precisely similar to that which the psalmist records in the 118th Psalm, 22d verse. In either case,

Jesus is pointed at as the Son of God, the Anointed of the Father. The refusal of the stone, and the denial of Jesus as the Christ, are one and the same thing. The apostle John has been guided by the Spirit of God so to write upon this subject as to invest what he relates with an air of peculiar importance. He follows up the explanation of our Saviour's words, descriptive of the wicked one, by a commentary upon his own; for he adds, "He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son." (1 John ii. 22.) This sentence is exceedingly plain. Who is antichrist? Is not Satan emphatically the opponent, the enemy of Christ? This our Saviour teaches in the parable of the tares. A man sowed good seed in his field; his enemy came and sowed tares. He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man. The enemy that sowed the tares is the devil. It is clear, therefore, that if he is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son, and if antichrist be the enemy of Christ, and if that enemy be the devil, then it follows that Satan denieth the Father and the Son. The meaning of the passage seems to be, that Satan did not believe in the existence of the Father and the Son; and to confirm the truth that it was the Son he refused to worship, it is added, "Whosover denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father." (1 John ii. 23.) It is most remarkable that when Jesus was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, and when the tempter came to him, he said, "If thou be the Son of God," (Matt. iv. 3,) and these words he repeated a second time. This event occurs after a lapse of not less than ten thousand years from the time he first refused to worship the Son; and, just as in the case of the temptation of Eve, he manifested one view of his own sin, when he said unto

the woman, "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" and further, "Ye shall not surely die." (Gen. iii. 1, 4.) In the question, expressing a doubt as to what God really had said; and in the statement, denying the truth God had spoken; so in the temptation of Christ, he manifests that when God brought His first-begotten into the world, and said, Let all the angels of God worship Him, that this was that saying which he would not believe, and did not obey; for he declares plainly in the use of the words, "If thou be the Son of God," twice repeated, that he does not even then believe Him to be the Son of God.

A very important truth is taught by Satan's not using these words, "If thou be the Son of God," as the preface to the third temptation recorded in Matthew iv. 8. It is a silent acknowledgment of the Sonship of Jesus. The first man was of the earth, earthy; Satan succeeded in tempting him into sin; but the second man was the Lord from heaven; and Satan no doubt felt that the successful resistance of Jesus when tempted by him, was a fulfilment of the curse pronounced by God against him, "It shall bruise thy head." From thence Satan knew Jesus to be the Son of God, for we find afterwards that devils acknowledge Him as such. "And behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? Art thou come hither to torment us before the time? So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine." (Matt. viii. 29, 31.)

Satan's disobedience was participated in by many of the heavenly host. God has declared the proportionate number that fell. It is revealed in the Scripture. Our Lord makes Himself known as "the bright and the

morning star," as well as "the root and the offspring of David." (Rev. xxii. 16.) The one figure describes His relation to angels, as the other describes His relation to men. He is the Archangel, as well as the King of saints. The bright and the morning star is a figure descriptive of His peculiar excellency, "bright," and also of His being the first-begotten, "morning star." He is not *a* bright and *a* morning star; but He is *the* bright and *the* morning star. All God's intelligent creatures are in various parts of Scripture represented under the figure of stars. But besides the bright and the morning star, there are morning stars:—"When the morning stars sang together." The distinction being because of their priority in creation. Just as Jesus is the bright and the morning star because He is the first-begotten, so angels are morning stars because of their creation before men. The morning stars who sang together have another description; they comprise all the sons of God who shouted for joy when God brought the first-begotten into the world, and made Him the corner stone thereof. They are those angels who worshipped the Son in obedience to the Father's command, and kept their first estate. The archangel is called Michael, and is spoken of by the apostle Jude as contending with the devil; (he disputed about the body of Moses.) That the power and the glory of Christ is the power and glory of the archangel, (there is only one spoken of in Scripture,) seems very clear from the words, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first." (1 Thess. iv. 16.) Our Lord says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is,

when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth. (John v. 25, 28.) The voice of the archangel in the one passage, is the voice of the Son of God in the other. "Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels. . . . And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." (Rev. xii. 7, 9.) In these verses are introduced the bright and the morning star, Michael; and the morning stars, his angels, fighting with the dragon, who is called the Devil and Satan. This is no doubt a prediction of the final conflict, but it also appears to be a description of the first conflict. The one will resemble the other. They fought with the dragon, indicating his leadership in the rebellion; then he is joined by his angels, and the dragon fought and his angels. In the same chapter we have a description of their fall, their relation to Satan, and the proportionate number who sinned. "And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth." (Rev. xii. 3, 4.) This is a twofold description of Satan. As in the case of the Lord Jesus, the one figure "having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads," describes his relation to men; the other figure, "and his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth," describes his relation to angels. His tail

in this passage are his angels in the 7th verse. In both passages they are said to be cast out into the earth, from heaven. Their following his example being the cause. His angels being his tail or followers that were cast out of heaven with him, the Scripture declaration is, that they are the third part of the stars of heaven. The elect angels are two thirds the whole number. The fallen angels are the remaining third of the whole number created.

These things being so, perhaps some may be ready to say, whence came sin? By whom was Satan tempted? In reply it can be said, neither from God, nor by God. Jehovah is the high and lofty one, and His very name is Holy, and He cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man. Let no man say that Satan was tempted of God. The apostle James, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, describes the origin of temptation—"But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then, when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." (Jas. i. 14, 15.) From this it is indisputable that sin originated in lust. The apostle Paul gives a further description of the origination of lust—"I had not known sin but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence." (Rom. vii. 7, 8.) This then is the illustration of the origin of sin, the commandment being the occasion, so the apostle adds, "Wherefore the commandment is holy, and just, and good." (Rom. vii. 12.)

The scene from whence the apostles, divinely inspired, have taken their illustrations, is obviously the tempta-

tion of Eve in the garden of Eden. They are, however, also an accurate description of the manner in which Satan fell. The command to him was, "Honour the Son as you honour the Father," "Let all the angels of of God worship Him." How exceedingly applicable the apostle Paul's words—"I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." Satan had not known lust but for the command, "Let all the angels of God worship Him." It is beyond all question, that Satan's sin was the coveting of Christ's honour and worship. His desire was to be regarded as superior to the Son. His lust was ambition: a desire to be pre-eminent. There is something very affecting in the narration of Christ's third temptation by the devil. It is one of the most painfully instructive passages in all Scripture. He begins by a silent acknowledgment of the Sonship of Christ, in the omission of the expression of unbelief used on the two previous occasions. He does not say again, "If thou be the Son of God." "The devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." (Matt. iv. 8, 9.) The devil, now persuaded that Jesus was the Son of God, the heir of all things, offers him back his rightful sovereignty and dominion. He actually offers him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them. In other words, he says, I now believe that all things have been made for you and by you. The kingdoms of this world shall become your kingdom, and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory unto it. I am willing to give up the struggle, and give you the undisturbed dominion over all, "if thou wilt fall down

and worship me." What a solemn scene! Here is made clear, beyond all controversy, Satan's sin; and such is the inveteracy of its nature, that while actually acknowledging himself vanquished, and professing his willingness to give every thing up to Christ, he still refuses to worship the Son, and makes the condition of the offer, that the Son fall down and worship him. Now we know for a certainty the origin of the great conflict. But we know also what it was that Michael the archangel contended with the devil about, (he disputed about the body of Moses.) There is an appearance of sincerity in the conduct of Satan in this matter. His is more like the pitiful appeal of fallen greatness. It is as if he had said, I no longer dispute thy power, thy greatness, thy glory, but my pride and lust of pre-eminence will not allow me to worship thee still, by a formal act of homage. I am willing, however, to give up all my pretensions to power, to greatness, and to glory, and resign all to thy hands; surely you will never refuse me a formal act of homage, if only from a motive of pity, when I am giving you such unmistakable proofs of my belief in your Sonship. It is not improbable that Satan was sincerely willing to give up the contest upon this single condition, and what a melancholy evidence it furnishes of the inveteracy of sin, and its debasing influence upon the greatest created mind. Satan began his career of wickedness by refusing to worship the Son. He is willing to terminate it, but proposes to do so upon a condition, the thought of which is sufficient to fill a believing mind with dismay and trembling. The mind which at first refused to worship the Son, having previously worshipped the Father, actually proposes by way of compromise, so to speak, not that the Son will forego

His claim to be worshipped upon Satan's giving up all pretensions to power and dominion, but now apparently lost to all sense of that homage which he, in his days of innocence, gave to the Father, as justly due to Him, he not only asks to be made equal with the Son, but he utters the awful blasphemy, which is inexpressible in language, nay, inconceivable in thought—thou, whom I acknowledge as the Son of God, the equal with the Father: thou, whose all things are, and for whom, and by whom, they are and were created: thou, God over all, blessed for ever—the object of all worship, if thou wilt fall down and worship me, I will give thee thine own, which I now know I cannot keep from thee. Oh! the blackness of that darkness which sin hath wrought in Satan's mind, and in every other mind in which it exists.

This temptation was armed with a potency when presented to the Lord Jesus, the extent of which Satan himself knew not. The human sympathy and compassion of the Divine Redeemer was above all measure great. He groaned within himself, and wept at the tomb of a beloved friend, Lazarus. When He came near and beheld the city of Jerusalem, on the occasion of His triumphal entry into it, "He wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes." (Luke xix. 41, 42.) This anguish and sorrow of Christ was over a wicked and doomed city, with the full knowledge that its inhabitants were very shortly to be guilty of His own blood; and manifests a compassion of heart which none but a Divine Being could either feel or exhibit. The Divine nature of Jesus, filled Him with all power to resist the

temptation presented to His human nature: but the union of the Divine and the human, made Him a being of infinite compassion, and sympathy, and pity. Satan's appeal was to the pity of the great Redeemer. The trial was a sore one. The struggles in the Saviour's heart was between pity for Satan and compassion for His own. It was a struggle, the very opposite of what He endured in the garden, when He sweat as it were great drops of blood. In the garden, the struggle was between the bitterness of the cup of His own suffering, and compassion for His own. In the wilderness, Satan was substituted for Himself in this part of the great temptation.

But it has another and a still severer aspect. In the garden of Gethsemane, His cry was three times repeated; "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." This prayer is of solemn import. The Saviour knew the glory that would follow His suffering. He foresaw the myriads who would be redeemed by His blood. He loved them with a love that passeth all knowledge; nevertheless, such was the awful bitterness and infinite severity of the sufferings He had to endure, that the Son of God, the incarnate Deity, the almighty Creator, shrunk back appalled and stricken with anguish, when the fulness of the time was come for Him to make expiation for the sins of the world; and in the midst of His agony He cries to His Father, again, and again, and again, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." Satan unconsciously presents this possibility, for he offers to give up the kingdom he had usurped dominion over; and he does it in precisely the same language in which the Saviour's final glory is predicted by Isaiah and in the Book of Revelation. It was as if Satan had said—You have

come to bruise my head, in doing which, I am to be permitted to bruise your heel. Come, let us make a compromise; I have no desire to molest you, and you can bruise my head, and take back all your power and glory without any suffering on your part, for I am antichrist; and if I retire from the contest the warfare is finished. One motive urged was pity for Satan himself; and the extent of the influence of this suggestion upon the Saviour's mind is thus expressed by an inspired apostle: "He durst not bring a railing accusation against him," (the devil.) (Jude 9.) That is, such was the powerfulness of the appeal, and the impression it made upon the Saviour, that, as in the case of His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, He wept over the city, and, so to speak, durst, or could not, bring a railing accusation against it: so in the wilderness, when thus tempted by Satan, He was also moved to pity, and could not bring a railing accusation against him. The other motive was His own personal safety, combined with the personal surrender of Satan, and the abdication of his power. The strength of this temptation can be judged of by comparing it with the scene in the garden of Gethsemane, where the Saviour desires the possibility now presented. What swayed the Saviour at this trying crisis? It was the body of Moses. That body was the occasion of dispute. It would appear that Satan did not know that the Son of God "took part of flesh and blood, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil: and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." (Heb. ii. 14, 15.) Had he known this, he would not have instigated Judas to betray Jesus, and the Jews to put Him to death. This further explains another passage of Scripture, which

is thus written: "And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan: even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the Lord stood by." (Zech. iii. 1—5.) Satan is here represented as the accuser of the brethren; and this no doubt arose from his ignorance of the scheme of redemption through the atonement of Christ. He appears as an angel of light, asking God as it were to visit Joshua, and every other man, with the merited penalty of sin. He is amazed to see a sinner honoured as Joshua is represented to be; and the knowledge of a sinner being accepted, and his sins pardoned, without the knowledge of the ground of his acceptance and pardon, may have originated in his mind the idea of a compromise with Christ, when after successfully withstanding him twice, He proved Himself to be the Lord from heaven.

The body of Moses was the ground of acceptance and pardon. "So Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there, in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day." (Deut. xxxiv. 5, 6.) This is the account

of a real transaction, but the act of God narrated has a figurative meaning. The transfiguration of our Lord throws light upon this matter. "And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: who appeared in glory." This is the resurrection of the figurative body of Moses, perhaps also of his real body. "They spake of his (Jesus) decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." (Luke ix. 30, 31.) The explanation being, that the atonement of Christ was the glorified body of Moses figuratively. The decease to be accomplished at Jerusalem being the substance; the law of Moses being the shadow.

This is very fully explained in the epistle of Paul to the Hebrews, from which the following quotation is made:—"But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God?" (Heb. ix. 11—14.) In other words, Christ's death is the end of the law for righteousness to them that believe.

That Christ's sufferings unto death was the real matter in dispute, is also proved by another passage, where Satan is again said to present himself, endeavouring, through Peter, to dissuade our Lord from His purpose. "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his

disciples how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." (Matt. xvi. 21—23.) Satan prompts Peter. The Lord rebukes him for thus attempting to dissuade Him from accomplishing His decease at Jerusalem, this being the body of Moses: and He adds, that Satan does not know this matter in its true light, for he savours not the things that be of God, but those things that be of men. Our Lord triumphed in the wilderness; and His victory, besides being the sure pledge of Satan's final and complete overthrow even as to his power over the kingdoms of this world, is the seal of his endless doom; for if ever a compromise could be made between Christ and Belial, (I speak with reverence of the Holy One,) certainly, the temptation in the wilderness would have occasioned it, when two such powerful motives were urging to it. The sin by which Satan fell, is still the sin that impels his action. Originally, his lust of pre-eminence produced unbelief in God's word, and disobedience of His command. Now when he believes and trembles, the same pride of heart rules in the midst of blackness and darkness, and he will not yet honour the Son, as he once honoured the Father; rather, he now prefers pre-eminence in hell, to a second place in heaven.

CHAPTER VIII.

We have been ascending by gradual steps this lofty mountain. One step more, and we shall have reached its summit, from which, as from Mount Pis-gah, like Moses of old, we shall behold the promised land. We are about to enter the holiest of all. God grant to all who meditate upon the things written in this book, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, with deep humility. We have already seen and heard much that is unspeakable of God. Still clouds and darkness are round about Him. There is only one way in which God can be seen by any creature, and that is by looking at Him in Himself. There is only one way in which men can be brought to "sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb: saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty: just and true are thy ways, thou king of saints;" (Rev. xv. 3;) and that is, by looking at His works and His ways through Himself. God is the only mirror possessing those immeasurable dimensions in which we can see His glory; and it is thus that "we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. iii. 18.)

Jehovah is the invisible God, "dwelling in the light

which no man can approach unto: whom no man hath seen neither can see." (1 Tim. vi. 16.) But "the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." (Rom. i. 20.) Thus it is, that what God has done is the glass in which to see Him as He is, and what He is, becomes the glass through which to behold what He has done. Jehovah is from everlasting to everlasting, and unchangeably the same. What He was, He still is; what He is, He will ever be. His is that fulness that filleth all things; and before the world was, His fulness was the same. To speak after the manner of men, there is the person of Jehovah, One God in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. There are also the attributes of Jehovah: Wisdom, Holiness, Justice, Goodness, Truth, Love, Mercy, Long-suffering, Compassion, Anger, and Wrath. This is the One all-perfect Being which the Scriptures reveal as the only living and true God. When He bringeth in His first-begotten into the world, "he had a name written that no man knew but he himself, and his name is called the Word of God." (Rev. xix. 12, 13.) He is "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power." (Heb. i. 3.)

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." (John i. 1—3.) This being so, it follows, that the Word being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and all things being made by the Word, so all things must be the brightness of the

same glory, and the express image of the same person. Whoever or whatever has proceeded from God, (and all things have been made by Him,) must have been like Him, in His image, when created. Not one faculty of a sentient being—not one atom of the material creation, but must have been in himself or itself like unto God, an expression of Himself; and when the whole work of God is finished, and the mystery revealed in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, then the whole creation shall be in its eternal state, one grand display of the glory of God—it shall be a perfect visible image of the invisible God—it shall be in truth and reality the Word of God. There shall be three distinct states of being,—heaven, earth, and hell; and these three shall be one expression of the one God. It will require all the three to give a perfect representation of the perfect character of God. In heaven, the state of angelic being will be witnessed—a display of the wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth of God, but no more. On earth, the state of redeemed men will be witnessed—a still more glorious display of Jehovah's attributes, for there will be seen the wisdom, the holiness, the justice, the goodness, the truth, the love, and the mercy of God. Without hell, the representation of Jehovah's character would be imperfect; for there will be witnessed the wisdom, the holiness, the justice, the goodness, the truth, the long-suffering, the compassion, the anger, and the wrath of God.

In no one state will there be any thing witnessed at variance with His perfect character. One may give a more full display of His glory than another, but each shall be perfect and complete in itself. "Whither shall I flee from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy

presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me." (Psalm cxxxix. 7—10.) In the beginning of creation, the great purpose of Jehovah was to build for Himself an house in which to dwell, a temple which He would fill with His eternal glory. The creating, and upholding, and preserving of the material universe; the creation of angels and men, the fall of angels and men, and the redemption of men, have all been subservient to the preparation of angels and men to fill their places in the three several states of being. In the entire history of the probationary state from beginning to end, there is one uniform display of the perfections of Jehovah, for they cry one to another, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory." Each particular event is equally a display of His glory; for although He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, He also careth for a sparrow, and numbers the very hairs of our head. While He dwells on high, filling with His presence and fulness all angels and all men, He also has concentrated the perfections of His glorious character within one soul: "For thus saith the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite one." (Isa. lvii. 15.)

The tabernacle of Moses made in the wilderness, is a figurative representation of the world's probationary state —the earthly house of this tabernacle. The particular

and minute instructions given by God to Moses to guide him in its construction, being intended to represent God's particular and minute care over all things, and the exact order and harmony of each and every event, both as to their time and manner of occurrence. The temple of Solomon, built upon Mount Sion, after the full conquest of the Holy Land, and in the midst of a reign of peace and glory, is a figurative representation of the temple of God to be built up in the last days of the world's existence in its present form; this is the true house of God, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. God has been graciously pleased, under these two figures, to reveal to angels and men His counsel which He purposed in Christ before the foundation of the world. God's creation of each angel and all angels —all his dealings with each angel and all angels—God's bringing His Son into the world, and giving Him power to save the good seed of men—God's creating the devil a holy angel, and giving him power as such, which he has made use of since his fall to sow tares or wicked men —in His dealings with each man and all men, both good and wicked, redeemed and lost—in every act of the Divine Being—in every aspect of the Divine procedure—in all things from beginning to end of this world's history, without one solitary exception, there is one and the same manifestation of the all-wise and perfect Jehovah. Neither angels nor men—neither holy angels nor fallen angels—neither saints nor sinners—not one of all the myriads of living intelligences which have been called into existence, whether their everlasting state be that of heaven, of earth, or of hell, shall ever be able to detect one spot or blemish, one flaw or defect, in any one of the innumerable ways and works of God in this world.

It will very much simplify the study of this great subject, if each reader will strive, by prayer to God, to obtain within himself, by the mighty working of the Holy Spirit, a correct apprehension of the incomprehensible nature of Jehovah. His eternal and immutable existence, His being the fulness of all things Himself, are two views of God which should be kept steadily before the mind. From the first moment of time down to the last, no matter what varieties and changes have been passing in the things created, the Creator changeth not. He is in Himself each moment what He has always been, and what He will never cease to be. But the manifestation of the excellency of His glory is gradual and progressive, onward to the end, when its full power and greatness will be disclosed. God made man in His own image, in the image of God created he him. This is true in respect of the relation of God to the creation; the mysterious union of the soul and body of man being a figurative representation of the union existing between Jehovah and all creation. The body of man was made for the soul, and through it its powers and faculties are made manifest. Creation was called into being by Jehovah, as a manifestation of His eternal power and Godhead. Man is first a child, but as a child possesses every part and faculty of his nature, which is gradually developed, until he grows to the stature of a perfect man in Christ. In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth, and the things therein. When created, they possessed all their properties, as a visible representation of the invisible God; but these have been gradually unfolded and developed, and will continue to be so until the times of the restitution of all things, when their full perfection will be disclosed.

Just as in His Attributes or Character, so in His Person; Jehovah must have a threefold representation. There are three persons in the One Godhead, so there must be three aspects, but one representation of the Godhead in creation. God the Father is manifested in heaven, the state of angelic being. The Invisible God has given an expression of His glory, the glory of the Father, in the creation of angels: "For I say unto you, their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. xviii. 10.) "When the Son of man cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels." (Mark viii. 38.) "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father, which art in heaven." (Matt. vi. 9.) Our Father whose glory is revealed in the angelic state of being. God the Son, the Word of God, is revealed on earth, the state of just men made perfect. "In Christ dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;" (Col. ii. 9;) and, "He is head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." (Eph. i. 22, 23.) Therefore, "He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe." (2 Thess. i. 10.) "And they sung a new song before the Lamb, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." (Rev. v. 9, 10.) God the Spirit, the Holy Ghost, is manifested in the state of judgment or condemnation. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of

God is manifest in them: for God hath showed it unto them." (Rom. i. 18, 19.) "It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth." (1 John v. 6.) The testimony of the Spirit is, that Jesus is the Son of God, "This is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son." (1 John v. 9.) "Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?" (1 John ii. 22.) The state of condemnation is the state of those beings who sin against the Holy Ghost. "Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme; but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation." (Mark iii. 28, 29.) "He that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark xvi. 16.) There shall be both angels and men in the state of condemnation, for it was Satan, an angelic being, who "filled the heart of Ananias to lie against the Holy Ghost." (Acts v. 3.) Therefore, if we make our bed in hell, there shall be the presence of the Spirit of the Lord, a witness for the truth. The Spirit is that witness, because the Spirit is truth.

Thus there being one God in three persons, one manifestation of the one God in three states of being: so there being three persons in the one God, there must be three manifestations of God in one state of being. God the Father is one God; and being the one God, must include the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost. In heaven, or the angelic state of being, the glory of God the Father is revealed; but there are also "three who bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and Holy Ghost: and these three are one." (1 John v. 7.) The Father bringeth the first-begotten into the angelic

world; the Spirit beareth witness to the Son; the morning stars sing together, and the sons of God shout for joy. Herein is a threefold manifestation of the one God, in the one state of angelic being. On earth—"in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and the ground of truth—the word of God is manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." (1 Tim. iii. 15, 16.) But "there are also three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one." (1 John v. 8.) "The Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me," saith the Word. (John xv. 26.) The water of regeneration signifying that process of renewal unto perfection, begun in every saint by the Father: Christ being the true vine, and His Father the husbandman, purging the branches that bear fruit, that they may bring forth more fruit. "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." (John xv. 3.) "Holy Father, ... sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." (John xvii. 11, 17.) Thus the Father, the Word, and the Truth, (the Spirit is Truth,) bear witness in the water. The blood of sprinkling which speaketh better things than that of Abel: "the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot unto God." (Heb. ix. 14.) Thus "Christ the eternal Spirit, and God the Father," bear witness in the blood. The testimony on earth is threefold, and each one of the three testimonies is a threefold testimony within itself; so that, there is a threefold testimony within a threefold testimony, agreeing in one. On earth, the state of redeemed

men: ye shall know the love of God the Father, who "so loved the world, as to send his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life:" (John iii. 16:) and ye shall know "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich:" (2 Cor. viii. 9:) and ye shall know the fellowship and communion of the Holy Spirit; for "God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ; (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. . . . For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. (Eph. ii. 4—7, 18, 20—22.)

In the state of condemnation, in the presence of the Spirit, there are three that bear record; for the Spirit—"when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin—because they believe not on Christ." (John xvi. 8, 9.) This being the sin against the Holy Ghost. "Of righteousness—because I go unto my Father, and ye see me no more." (John xvi. 10.) They that despise Christ, despise Him that sent Him; and "they have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ

is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." (Rom. x. 3, 4.) "Of judgment—because the prince of this world is judged." (John xvi. 11.) "The angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains unto the judgment of the great day. . . . Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. (Jude 6, 14, 15.) "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation: and he (or they) shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb." (Rev. xiv. 10.) Thus also there is a threefold testimony in hell to the one God; for they are tormented in the presence of the holy angels, (the Father,) the presence of the Lamb; (the Son;) and they who make their beds in hell, are in the presence of the Spirit. Oh! "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest." (Rev. xv. 3, 4.) "Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. (Rev. xiv. 7.)

Thus we have seen that the one God in three persons has destined the end of creation to be one glorious image of Himself in three states of being; and that

within each one of these three states of being there is another threefold representation of the Great Jehovah; and within one of these last three there is another threefold representation of the great Creator. Heaven, earth, and hell, are three in one. Heaven is three in one. Earth is three in one. Hell is three in one. Each one of the three on earth is three in one. Great and marvellous work.

God is revealed as a Being possessing certain attributes of character, and certain persons in the One Eternal Power and Godhead. Whatever is revealed as the nature and character of Jehovah, is essential to His Being as God. Take away any portion of His glorious attributes—take away any one of the three divine persons in the Godhead, and the Eternal and Holy One would not be Himself. The image of God must resemble Him exactly in all respects, or it is defective; and this we know it cannot be, because it is the work of the perfect One. Therefore blot out from existence one of the three states of being, and creation would cease to be the image of its Creator.

Every attribute of God's character is like the one God, perfection itself, and shines forth with the full radiance of the infinite glory of the Godhead; and the eternal glory of the Godhead is dependent (I speak after the manner of men, because human language fails to convey the correct idea) upon the eternal and immutable perfection of each and every one of the Divine attributes. Impair one of them, and Jehovah would not be Himself. His Holiness, His Love, His Wrath, are three distinct, and, to human appearance, opposite or conflicting attributes of Jehovah. His Justice and His Mercy are the same. Not only is it essential that each

be untrammelled in its full exercise in itself, but all must be untrammelled in their full exercise; and all must be in their full exercise at one and the same time; and all must be displayed in one glorious work of God, ere it can be the express image of the invisible God. Wherever the attributes of Jehovah are manifested, there too must all the persons in the Godhead be represented, otherwise it is not an image of the invisible God, for He is one God. His person and perfections are one. The three states of being are one image of Jehovah, and declare His Eternal Power and Godhead; therefore each of the three states must be perfect in itself; and the existence and stability of the whole is dependent upon the existence of each individual one. The fall of Satan and his angels is essential to the existence of the angelic state in heaven. The condemnation of fallen angels and wicked men is essential to the existence of the state of redeemed men on earth. The existence of the state of redeemed men on earth is another essential element in the existence of the angelic state in heaven. The existence both of heaven and of earth is essential to the existence of the state of condemned angels and men. Just because there is a heaven and an earth, there must be a hell. Because there is a hell, there must be a heaven and an earth. Wondrous mystery, that in all the three, and in each one of the three, there shall be an everlasting testimony to the glorious, immutable, and eternal perfections of the three persons in one Godhead.

Each individual angel and man is in his origin the offspring of Deity, created in His own image, and after His own likeness; therefore, the nature of each angel and all angels, the nature of each man and all men, supplies a reason for the existence of each and all of the

states, because all have been created in the image of God. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." (Gen. i. 1.) "In the beginning." What meaneth this? "I am alpha and omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord." (Rev. i. 8.) Again, the same blessed Jesus says, "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God." (Rev. iii. 14.) Again, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." (Eph. ii. 10.) It is obvious that the meaning of the inspired record is, that "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made." (John i. 1—3.) Therefore in Christ (the beginning) God created the heaven and the earth. "In the beginning" has a twofold meaning; in relation to the Being of Christ, it refers "to the eternal purpose which God purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Eph. iii. 11.) "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world." (Eph. i. 4.) In relation to creation itself, it is the time when He laid the foundations of the earth: "when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." (Job xxxviii. 7.) God's eternal purpose was "in the beginning," (in Christ,) and His manifestation of that eternal purpose was "in the beginning," (in Christ,) by creating simultaneously angels and men, heaven and earth. From the time of His manifestation, the Son voluntarily assumed the character of a servant, sent forth to do the will of God. He then appeared in his twofold character, the representative of God and men; for in Him all His people were then virtually created. From the beginning:

that is, from the time of Christ's manifestation, the three states of being must be traced; for at the beginning, that is the time of the manifestation of Christ, they had their origin. Let it be remembered, the revealed purpose of God is to make a temple of living beings, like Himself, which He is to fill with His glory. Every act of God is an embodied representation of God, and must be like God. Every emanation from the deity must be like the deity. To begin the illustration with angels. Every angel is like God. All angels are like God. Herein is displayed the manifold wisdom of God in creating beings like Himself, immortal—like Himself in freedom of will —like Himself in faculty of mind—like Himself in feeling and sympathy—like Himself in their entire nature; and He Himself still the same, One living and true God. Christ is His express image. His name is the bright and the morning star: angels must resemble Him, for they are called morning stars. Jesus is the son of God: they are called the sons of God. Christ is God: they are called gods. "For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many and lords many,) but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him: and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." (1 Cor. viii. 5, 6.) "For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God." (Deut. x. 17.) The very nature of Jehovah precludes the possibility of the existence of a rival to Himself. He being the one God who inhabiteth eternity. Truly this is a great mystery, the existence of gods within the Being of the one God, their existence being not only within the Being, but in the very nature of the one God. There is something truly grand in this contemplation of the

deity; and this display of His wisdom is beyond all conception. God filling all things with His own fulness, and yet within that fulness innumerable beings like Himself; intelligent and free agents; regulating all their conduct just as Jehovah Himself, according to their own will. The beauty and sublimity of this scene will be the theme of endless meditation and delight to myriads of immortals. Each angel is within himself in relation to other angels an independent existence; but all angels are dependent upon God; while, however, each is as free within himself to will and to do as if he alone were God. It is in this sense peculiarly that they are created in the image of God. God's government of His intelligent offspring is a moral government. The attractive loveliness of His own character—the excellency of His goodness—the moral grandeur of His nature; these, developed in His works and ways, are the grounds upon which He has been pleased to build His claim to receive homage and obedience. The government of power and authority is not the kind of government which exists in heaven. True, there are principalities and powers in heavenly places; but these are principalities and powers of moral greatness. Those who excel in strength there are the beings of greatest comparative loveliness—the beings of greatest comparative goodness. The rule of God's own kingdom is a rule of love. An act proceeding from a will constrained by fear and not by love is not the act of the will of a holy being. The essence, so to speak, of heaven is that the will of God is the will of every one there, and that just because it is their will. The derived existence of such beings makes them dependent. Because of their dependence, they are accountable. Because of their accountability, they are free. To govern such beings

there is no need of a code of laws with annexed penalties. That is the kind of government for the lawless and rebellious. Therefore it is that the only command given from the beginning was, "Let all the angels of God worship the Son." One-third of the angelic host refused obedience, and left their own habitation. Two-thirds of the angelic host sang together and shouted for joy. This event occurred at the manifestation of Christ. "For the devil sinneth from the beginning;" (1 John iii. 8,) that is, from Christ. But for this event, the fact of the freedom of the will of angels would have been practically unknown. But for this event, the freedom of the will of all created intelligences would have been practically unknown. But for this event, the sovereign will of Jehovah, ruling over all in perfect harmony with the entire freedom of the will of every intelligent being, would have been unknown.

Let the most clamorous disputant cease for a little, if not for ever, his noisy, his profitless, his unmeaning declamations. Sit down, patiently investigate, carefully examine, rigorously try by the most stringent rules of holiness, justice, goodness, and truth, every part and aspect of the Divine procedure at this the all-important point in the world's history, and say, can you find the semblance of a flaw, or aught having an approach in the most remote degree to an act at variance with any one of the glorious attributes of Jehovah's character? Truly there is a mystery of iniquity. All angels had the same nature at creation. Does any one ask an evidence of the equity of God's doing? Consider the angels still in heaven: they are a testimony for God and against the fallen angels. What is said concerning them in Scripture? "They left their own habitation." (Jude 6.) It

was their own act. They would not remain in heaven. They will not now go back. Their works since they fell testify the awful malignity of their nature. They never can, they never will be able to charge God in any way because of their ruin. Their only ground of hostility to Jehovah is His excellence; this being so, it is a solemn evidence of the blackness of their darkness. It is a most important fact, that the everlasting song of holy angels will be an echo, so to speak, of this manifestation of Jehovah's character. "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." (Rev. v. 11, 12.) The fallen angels then refused, still refuse, ever will refuse to worship Christ. What a rebuke of their sin; what a testimony to God's justice and equity will be the everlasting song of holy angels, for it is the adoration of Him who was despised.

The results of this event may now be considered. The sin of angels brought forth a more glorious display of God's character; for then were seen both the goodness and the severity of God. His goodness to them who worshipped—His severity to them who fell. Prior to this there was a possibility of confusion being wrought among God's offspring. This event placed every thing in a state of admirable order and harmony. It produced a moral law, similar to the law of gravitation in the natural world. A law by which each star would for ever be kept in its own position, and would be prevented from collision or interference with other stars; while all

would occupy their true position to their great Creator, the centre Sun of the whole system. The fall of angels, and the exhibition of God's character thereby brought about, will preserve the holy angels in heaven for ever. It will place an impassable barrier between the fallen angels and the holy angels; for light cannot dwell with darkness, and darkness will not dwell with light; and it will enable God to rule in the moral world, not by power or compulsion, which is incompatible with freedom; but by the display of Himself thus given, He will present to the righteous a moral claim upon their reverence and affection, and to the wicked a moral denunciation against all ungodliness.

We shall now introduce men. Hitherto God's ways have been glorious. Each of His acts being like Himself. But we have been viewing His doings at a great disadvantage. If up to this point in the subject now under consideration, we are constrained to admire and adore the wisdom of God; what follows so much transcends the past, as to demand our everlasting songs of praise. Satan is now established as a rival to the Son of God. He has drawn with him from heaven one third of the angelic hosts, each one of the number being a willing follower of their wicked leader. He had a power given him at creation so great as to make him the father of life to other beings intelligent like himself. This fact is already proved; and when we consider that to Adam a similar power of transmitting life was given, we need not be surprised. Adam and Eve were the natural progenitors of the faithful. Through their fall Satan planted the tares, his wicked children. Abraham is called the father of the faithful in a figurative sense, because of his own faith. The seed of Abraham were to

be in number like the stars of heaven. "And God brought Abraham forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them. And he said unto him, So shall thy seed be." (Gen. xv. 5.) It has already been shown, that the stars are the figurative representation of angels. Speaking of the spiritual seed of Abraham, our Lord says, "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. (Mat. xviii. 10.) It is a reasonable inference, that the number of saved men will correspond with the number of elect angels. Probably our Lord's design is to teach the same truth, when in reply to certain of the Sadducees which deny that there is any resurrection, He said, "They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." (Luke xx. 35, 36.) Husband and wife are companions. The angels are the glory of the Father. The church, or redeemed men, are the bride, the Lamb's wife—the glory of the Son. I and my Father are one, says the Saviour. In the beginning, that is in Christ, God created the heaven and the earth. The former the state of angels, the latter the state of men. It seems undoubted, that the being equal unto the angels comprises, among other things, an equality of the number of redeemed men. They being the heavenly companions of men, and the number of the human family being then complete, men do not marry. The perfect equality of the Son with the Father confirms this view of truth.

This being so in the states of holiness, it is exceedingly probable, that the same thing is true of fallen angels and wicked men, their number being also equal. Now if this be so, (I know it to be certain,) observe the results. Two thirds of the angels are in heaven: one third are in a state of condemnation. Two thirds of men are on earth saved: one third are in a state of condemnation. One third of all God's intelligent offspring are in heaven; another third are on earth; the remaining third are in a state of condemnation. So that in point of number, the Deity in three persons is equally represented in three states of being. To those in heaven, all God's dealings have been, infinite goodness; to those on earth, infinite love; to those under condemnation, long suffering and patience, until the day of wrath. Those on earth were children of wrath by nature even as others. Granting for the present the fact of their full and free pardon, and new nature, still their mortal, their vile body must be changed; they must suffer in the flesh before they can enter the kingdom of God. God so loves them, that He Himself cannot inflict pain upon them, because their sins are all pardoned. "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2 Tim. iii. 12.) Marvellous wisdom, that which could not do because of His love to them, Satan and wicked men are prepared to do to the fullest extent God permits, because of their hatred towards them. "But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now." (Gal. iv. 29.) This is the sin of devils and wicked men—it is for the profit of God's children—it is glorifying to the great Jehovah.

In creation, God is giving a complete manifestation of

Himself. Throughout all eternity the three states of being will faithfully represent His glory. God is a God of feeling and of sympathy. His is not the lifeless impress made by a seal upon the melted wax. His is a nature that acts and is reacted upon. The image of Jehovah's person and perfections is complete in the threefold state of being, but one of these is a suffering and darkened state. Hear, O heavens, give ear, O earth. Shall not the judge of all the earth do right? The Son of God voluntarily undertakes the redemption of those whom the Father loved. "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God." (Psalm xl. 7, 8.) "God the Father so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.) Oh, that wondrous cross! that wondrous decease which Jesus accomplished at Jerusalem! Jesus of Nazareth united in one person the nature of the Son of God, the only begotten of the Father, and a sinless human nature. He was the Son of the Highest, and the man Christ Jesus. His divine nature gave to his human nature not only an infinite excellency and glory, but also an infinite susceptibility of pain and anguish. He was the eternal Son of God, of boundless compassion; the meek and lowly Jesus; the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. In His bitter cup there were three ingredients. The night on which He was betrayed was the hour and the power of darkness. Then came forth in its true character the nature and kind of that spirit which worketh in the children of disobedience. Devils and wicked men united together. They assailed the holy and the just One. Oh! appalling wickedness; creatures are so filled with malignity that

they killed the Prince of Life! What must be the spirit of them who crucified the Lord of glory? To persecute His people because they hate them, is a high offence against heaven; but how daring the crime, how awful the wickedness manifested by devils and wicked men in slaying the Son of God! Behold the true character of Satan; he is a murderer, the murderer of his God, and that because he hates Him; and he hates Him because God is holy, and he is wicked. Behold in this the true character of wicked angels and men; they are of their father the devil, and the works of their father they will do. Every unbeliever in Christ is of the devil; and they who believe not die in their sins, and their unbelief proves them to be of the spirit of him and them who crucified the Saviour. "His blood be on us and on our children," is an imprecation of Divine wrath which every one in hell shall know the meaning of for ever and ever by painful experience. Wondrous spectacle! God the Son, the second of the three persons in the Godhead, suffering death through the malignity, and at the hands of the representatives of one third of His intelligent creatures, Himself the representative of another third of His intelligent creatures in whose room He is suffering, the just for the unjust. Behold here, in a crucified Redeemer, the eternal Son of God. Behold now the everlasting malignity of devils and wicked men.

I confess myself utterly incompetent to carry out the illustration of this glorious subject. It is to be the theme of eternal praise—the subject of eternal admiration. Who then can imagine its sublimity? We have seen how sin entered, and its consequences to those who transgressed. Not only has it arrayed angels and men against angels and men, and angels and men against

God, but the conflict has been carried into the very being of God Himself; it has arrayed God against Himself. This is a real transaction; He who hung upon the cross of Calvary was verily God and man. He suffered through His human nature. His human nature was rendered susceptible of infinite anguish, because of its union with the divine. He suffered for sin in the room of sinners, and therefore He was stricken, smitten of God. "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the Shepherd." (Zech. xiii. 7.) On the cross of Christ every attribute of the Divine character was glorified, and the equity of the Divine procedure declared to all eternity. God the Son offered Himself, through the Eternal Spirit, without spot unto God. In the suffering Saviour, what a display of goodness, mercy, and love to His own; long-suffering and compassion towards His malignant persecutors! In the infliction of Divine wrath, and the Saviour's endurance of it, what a display of the holiness, the justice, the truth of Jehovah, and His anger and wrath because of sin! The most affecting view of all still remains: God's love was arrayed against God's love—the Father's love for His Son, against His love for His people. When in the suffering Saviour, God's love for His Son was arrayed against His holiness, His justice prevailed, because His Son was voluntarily the substitute for sin, according to the will of God. When God's mercy to His people was arrayed against His justice, His love to them prevailed, and in the sufferings of Christ both claims are fully met. But when His love for His Son was arrayed against His love for His people—and we know that He loved them, even as He loved His Son—when these two were arrayed against each other in the eternal mind, why did He not

spare the innocent, and punish the guilty? If both were the objects equally of eternal love—if both were alike precious in His sight—and He tells us so Himself—why, O why, did God visit in the person of His well-beloved and holy Son, the guilt of sinful men whom He also loved? It was, that through all ages "He might be known as just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." (Rom. iii. 26.) Not merely just in justifying believers; that would not explain why His love for His people prevailed over His love for His Son; because He would have been just in condemning them the guilty, equally, if not more so, than in inflicting upon His holy Son the eternal penalty of sin. He hid His face from His Son: Christ endured His wrath, that throughout all eternity there might be in heaven, in earth, and in hell, one glorious testimony of the equity of all God's doings. He called the world into being to be an image of Himself, to show forth His glory. In doing so, one third of that world is smitten with eternal darkness: behold, how equal are the ways of God: the sufferings of His only Son are the counterpart in the Deity. of the sufferings of His creatures. The third part (so to speak,) of the eternal Godhead suffered upon the cross what the third part of His creatures can endure within no less a space than eternity: thus Jehovah making His Son perfect through suffering, perfects for ever the likeness between creation and Himself. Hear still the wondrous wisdom; those sufferings were the price of earth's redemption, and in the glories of a redeemed people throughout eternity, the Saviour will see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied. Oh! how equal are all the ways of God: the sufferings complete the perfection of the likeness between God and

creation, but without their reward in the redemption of a third part of creation, they would not have been just. Just as in the case of God's people, devils and wicked men are guilty instruments of persecution, so in the case of the Son of God, the third part of creation wickedly slew the great Redeemer, for this act all in hell have ratified by their unbelief. Oh! how just their condemnation to eternal wrath—how equal are the ways of God. Thus we see the third part of God smitten, the third part of angels smitten, the third part of men smitten because of sin. Thus it is, that the sufferings of the Son of God being that of the just and holy One, must have two echoes in eternity—one, the wailings of the lost, his murderers in a double sense, as sinners by nature, and as the actual inflictors of His agony; another in the hallelujahs of the redeemed, the reward of His pouring out His blood unto death. So that not only will each and all the states of being be a perfect representation of God, as already shown, but each state will prove that God is just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. God Himself, in the person of the Lamb once slain, declaring Himself just in punishing the wicked. Redeemed men declaring Him just in punishing the wicked, and justifying them. Devils and wicked men, notwithstanding their impenitence and unbelief, silent and speechless; thus testifying that God is just in condemning them and justifying the redeemed. Holy angels, who never fell, testifying the equity of God in all that has been done; their unfallen state being the counterpart of the sin and ruin of the condemned, a third against a third. Redeemed men on earth being the counterpart of Christ's sufferings in their room, another third against another third. "Yet ye say, The way of

the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel, Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal?" (Ezek. xviii. 25.) "O sing unto the Lord a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory. The Lord hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly showed in the sight of the heathen. He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth hath seen the salvation of our God. Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise. Sing unto the Lord with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm. With trumpets, and sound of cornet, make a joyful noise before the Lord the King. Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills be joyful together before the Lord: for he cometh to judge the earth; with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity." (Psalm xcviii.)

CHAPTER IX.

We shall now turn our attention to the Book of the Revelation, given to the apostle John.

Chap. i., ver. 1, 2. "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw."

God gave the Revelation unto Jesus Christ. This statement teaches that God is one, and His purpose one; and that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, although one of the three persons in the Godhead, came into this world to declare the counsel of God, and to do the will of His Father. It cannot be said that the Son of God needed to have knowledge communicated to Him, for He knoweth all things. The idea which the words convey is, that God has a fixed and unalterable purpose in relation to this world, of which the Son, as the second person in the Godhead, is fully aware. It is called the Revelation of Jesus Christ, because that in Him, and by Him, the Divine purpose is manifested. It is said that God gave it unto Him not because of any inferiority in the person of Jesus as the Son of God; on the contrary, it means that He is the representative of the Godhead—

that into His hands the Father hath given all things, and that He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. "To show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass." The Revelation of Jesus Christ is the whole counsel and pleasure of Jehovah; and the Book of Revelation embraces all God's purpose in relation to this world from beginning to end. Much of what it contains has a reference to things past, at the time it was written by the apostle. In one sense, the whole was future, and up to this hour it is all future, so far as regards a correct knowledge of the meaning of what is written; this was not to be given until the time appointed, when all the books of Scripture would be opened, and the mystery of God should be finished. "And he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John; who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw." These words apply to the previous writings of John, which form a portion of the New Testament Scriptures; but their principal application is to the contents of the Book of Revelation, for what is recorded in the 2d verse must have been written after the apostle saw all things in the isle of Patmos. The Word of God is the Son Himself: and the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy; so that when John bare record of the Word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ, the record comprehends the substance of all Scripture.

Ver. 3. "Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein, for the time is at hand."

The Book of Revelation being a summary of what is revealed in other parts of Scripture, a man may be said to read and hear the words of this prophecy when he

studies any other portion of Scripture in which the practical duties of religion are taught and enforced. The Revelation is very obscure, and the true meaning of the verse may be, that when men hear the words of this prophecy, the time of its great fulfilment and completion will be at hand. Observe what is said: "Blessed is he that readeth;" that is, blessed is he that maketh plain the words of this prophecy, and they that hear them and act upon them after they are made plain, because when that event takes place the time of the end is at hand.

Ver. 4, 5. "John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven spirits which are before his throne; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first-begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth."

John writes as the messenger of God to the seven churches which are in Asia. The number seven is a complete number, and is used in Scripture to denote all. In the present passage, the Eternal Spirit is represented under the figure of the seven spirits; so that John, when writing unto the seven churches in Asia, must be regarded as addressing all the churches in Asia. The part of the world in which these churches were situated, is that which is figuratively called, in prophetic language, the rivers and fountains of water; through which issued forth from the then figurative earth, the land of Judea, the streams of gospel light and heavenly life, running into the figurative sea, the nations and people of Europe; so that in addressing the seven churches in Asia, John may further be regarded as addressing all the churches of Christ in all ages. "Grace be unto you and peace."

All messages from heaven are messages of peace and good will to man; although wicked and unbelieving men wrest what is said to their own destruction, still, by God's children, all He says is received and believed, and to them it becomes the savour of life unto life. "From him which is, and which was, and which is to come;" that is, the everlasting Father. "And from the seven spirits which are before his throne;" that is, the eternal Spirit. "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness;" therefore we must rely with implicit confidence on all He has said; "and the first-begotten of the dead;" therefore we should look forward in faith to His second coming, and our own resurrection, He being the first-fruits of them that slept. "And the Prince of the kings of the earth;" therefore His people should not be afraid of them who can only kill the body; for they have no power except it were given them from above.

Ver. 5, 6. "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

The apostle here indicates the spirit in which God's children should receive His word: he inculcates the duty of cherishing a warm and grateful remembrance of the infinite debt of gratitude we owe our great Redeemer; and he encourages us to manifest our heartfelt thankfulness, by openly adoring His glorious name, and ascribing to Him that praise and honour which is peculiarly His own. He teaches that Christ's love is the origin of all He has done for us:—"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood." He further teaches, that one result of the death of Christ is, to make all His people equal in the sight of His Father.

"And hath made us kings." That is, every saint is a king. There is no authority among Christ's people: for Jesus said unto them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them: and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors," (Luke xxii. 25,) because they are sent by God, "for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well." (1 Peter ii. 14.) "But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve." (Luke xxii. 26.) "And hath made us priests:" for ye are "an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ:" (1 Peter ii. 5:) so that none can lay claim to any peculiar sanctity of person or sacredness of office in the church of Christ, all being priests unto God. "To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen." The origin of salvation is the eternal love of God; and the end of salvation is the eternal glory of God. So be it, for evermore, world without end.

Ver. 7. "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen."

"Behold he cometh with clouds," signifies His coming with power and great glory to fill this world with His praise, when every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. "And every eye shall see him." The kingdom of heaven cometh not with observation, but is within you; and the coming of the Son of man will be as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west. The event here predicted is the latter-day glory of Christ's kingdom upon this earth, before the

end come. "So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun." (Isa. lix. 19.) "And they also which pierced him." This will be the fulfilment of what is written by the prophet Zechariah, saying, "I will pour out upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplications; and they shall look upon me when they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born." (Zec. xii. 10.) "And all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." These words have a twofold meaning. They predict the godly sorrow of the converted of all kindreds, when the fulness of the Gentiles shall be brought into Christ's kingdom. They also predict that time of great trouble among all kindreds, which shall precede the universal diffusion of the gospel among all nations, and kindreds, and tongues, and people. "Even so, Amen." For when these things begin to come to pass, we shall look up, and lift up our heads, for then our redemption draweth nigh.

Ver. 8. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord." Christ is the sum and substance of all things: He is the origin and the end of creation: He is the origin and the end of redemption: He is the origin and the end of the existence of angels and men: He is the origin and the end of all principalities, and powers, and dominions, and thrones: He is the origin and the end of every event in Providence; a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His know-

ledge; He numbers the very hairs of our head: He also doeth according to His will among the army of heaven and the inhabitants of this earth. Empires rise and fall at the time and in the manner He is pleased to appoint. "Which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." He is the fulness of Him that filleth all in all, in the past, the present, and the future; the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. He is not only mighty, but He is omnipotence itself.

Ver. 9. "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."

John says, "I am your brother;" there is no superiority in my relation to our common Lord and Master, over what ye all possess; for He loved us all, and, therefore, we should love one another as brethren. "Your companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ." I am not exempt from those persecutions which all who live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer; and I have need of patience, that after I have done the will of God I may receive the promise. "Was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." Satan instigated the enemies of the gospel to banish me to this lonely spot. If there be any superiority in me, it is that the sufferings of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ are much more participated in by me than by other believers. What the enemies of Christ designed for the hinderance of the truth, our great Redeemer has made conducive to His own glory, and the enlightenment of the church in the ages that are yet to come.

Ver. 10. "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last."

There is no doubt that the first day of the week is here called the Lord's day. Jesus having chosen that day more than once after His resurrection as the day in which to appear among His disciples, and His declaring Himself to be the Lord of the sabbath, clothes this passage not merely with an inferential, but with the power of an authoritative command to His people, in all ages, to remember the sabbath-day on the first day of the week, and keep it holy, because it is the Lord's day, just as the last supper is the Lord's supper, both being commemorative of His great work until He come again. The apostle was in the spirit, and heard behind him a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega. It is good to draw near unto the Lord; and we know not how wondrous are the manifestations of Himself which God will give unto them who pray earnestly for His Spirit. John was attracted by something very unusual. It was the same with Moses, he saw a bush burning with fire, but not consumed. God mercifully condescends to give to His servants abundant testimony that it is He who calls them, when He desires them to perform any particular work. What happened to the apostle is typical of the manner in which God will reveal Himself in the church in the last days. The Lord's day, as regards Jesus Himself, is the eternal, the unending day; and of this eternal rest, each returning sabbath is a type. But there is a peculiar day of the Lord spoken of by all the prophets. Being a prophetic day, it signifies a year. Of this year the psalmist speaks, when he says, "This is the day which the Lord hath made: we

will rejoice and be glad in it." (Psalm cxviii. 24.) Of this year the prophet Malachi speaks when he says, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of that great and dreadful day of the Lord." (Mal. iv. 5.) Of this year the jubilee of the Mosaic law was a type: "And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound, on the tenth day of the seventh month; in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout your land. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family." (Lev. xxv. 8—10.) This year of jubilee is the true jubilee of the church, the jubilee of the chosen nation, and through it the jubilee of the world. "For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come," saith the Lord. (Isa. lxiii. 4.) It will be ushered in by an abundant outpouring of God's Holy Spirit; a great voice as of a trumpet shall be heard, even the voice of Him who hath said, "The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining:" that is, the brightness of the coming of the Lord shall eclipse the glory of the kingdoms of this world. "The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel." (Joel iii. 15, 16.) The Lord shall openly declare Himself the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending of all things.

Ver. 11. "And what thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea."

John was commanded to write in a book what he saw, and send it unto the seven churches. What was revealed was to be made known in a written form to all the churches, or all the followers of Christ. The seven churches are specifically named, indicating that Jesus calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. So in like manner it is predicted that in the year of the world's jubilee, "they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened and heard it; and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name." (Mal. iii. 16.)

Ver. 12. "And I turned to see the voice that spake with me."

Moses turned aside to see the great sight, the bush burning, but not consumed. John turned to see the voice that spake with him. Christ's sheep hear His voice. Alas! all will not hear in that day, for "many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand." (Daniel xii. 10.)

Ver. 12, 13. "And, being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle."

The seven golden candlesticks are the seven churches,

(Ver. 20,) these are all the thousands of Israel who have not bowed the knee to Baal. The figure is exceedingly appropriate and expressive. The prophet Zechariah saw the same figure—"And the angel said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps which are upon the top thereof." The churches being represented under the figure of a candlestick, indicates that they have no light in themselves, but are made instrumental, as a candlestick, to give light to others, after they have themselves received the light from above. "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house." (Matt. v. 14, 15.) Its being made of gold, denotes "that the trial of faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth," is a fiery trial, even as in a furnace seven times heated; but one like unto the Son of man is seen in the midst of his people, and of all the churches. "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. xxviii. 20.) The scene described by the apostle is similar to what he witnessed on the mount of transfiguration, and both point to the same great event, yet to come, in the history of the world. Both are typical representations of the great glory with which the Lord shall yet transfigure His body, the church, in its earthly state. When the books are opened, when Moses and Elias, Christ and His apostles appear in the glorious and holy mountain, speaking together—when the harmony of all Scripture shall be made plain—when Jesus shall be seen and

acknowledged by all to be the beginning and also the ending of Scripture, as well as of creation and redemption—then Christ shall be clothed with a garment down to the foot, and his prayer shall be answered, "that they, (his people,) all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." (John xvii. 21—23.) For "there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." (John x. 16.) "And girt about the paps with a golden girdle," signifying that His people shall "put on as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, (that is love,) which is the bond of perfectness:" the golden girdle of Christ's body. (Col. iii. 12—14.) "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you." (John xv. 12.) For "by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." (John xiii. 35.) Speaking of these days, the prophet Isaiah saith, "Therefore my people shall know my name: therefore they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak; behold, it is I. How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith

unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion." (Isaiah lii. 6—8.)

Ver. 14, 15. "His head and his hairs where white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters."

His head and hairs being white, denote our Lord's being from everlasting to everlasting, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. His eyes being as a flame of fire, denote His omniscience; all things being naked and open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. His feet like fine brass burning in a furnace, denote His being made perfect through suffering. And His voice, as the sound of many waters, denotes the multitudes of many nations, and kindreds, and tongues, and people, who in these days shall be witnesses for Christ, and declare His glory, with a loud voice, unto all the ends of the earth.

Ver. 16. "And he had in his right hand seven stars; and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword; and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength."

The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches. The seven stars are all the angels of God. The seven churches are all believers in Christ: for I say unto you, their angels do alway behold the face of my Father in heaven. "The word of God shall then be made quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and be a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Heb. iv. 12.)

"And his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength." "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." (Mat. xiii. 43.) This is the time of which the prophet Daniel spake, when he said, "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. . . . I saw in the night-visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." (Dan. vii. 9, 10, 13, 14.)

Ver. 17, 18. "And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."

"When I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead." It was one like unto the Son of man: he saw a figurative representation of Christ's body, the church, as it will appear unto all men when the Lord shall take unto Him His great power and reign. John fell at his feet as dead: he was the beloved disciple; he had seen his Divine

master upon earth; he saw Him expire upon the cross; he saw Him in the mount of transfiguration; he saw Him ascend to heaven; he was present with the other disciples when the Holy Ghost was outpoured on the day of pentecost; he had done and suffered much for his great Redeemer; nevertheless, the sight he now saw laid him prostrate as dead. What a solemn epoch in this world's history must be the time of the fulfilment of what John saw, when because of the vision he fell as dead! If the typical representation be so glorious, bow much more so must the thing itself be? The manifestation of the Redeemer's glory in this world, when Elias comes to restore all things, is the great event here prefigured. The times of the restitution of all things are important times; so much so, that of them "God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear that prophet shall be destroyed from among the people. Yea, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days." (Acts iii. 21—24.) Abraham saw the Lord's day afar off, and was glad. To them who love and look for the appearing of the Lord, it will be a year of unspeakable joy. Still it has a dark aspect; the day of His glory is also the day of His power—the day of His love is also the day of His wrath: "for then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no

flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." (Matt. xxiv. 21, 22.) It was in reference to these days that Balaam said, "Alas! who shall live when God doeth this?" (Num. xxiv. 23.) Of these days David spake when he said, "The mighty God, even the Lord, hath spoken, and called the earth, from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined. Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him." (Psalm l. 1—3.) Of these days Isaiah spake when he said, "My righteousness is near; my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the people: the isles shall wait upon me, and on mine arm shall they trust. Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished." (Isa. li. 5, 6.) These are the things of which Daniel speaks when he says, "I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?" (Dan. xii. 8.) To the ungodly and unbelieving, the day of the Lord will be a great calamity. It will be the time when they shall fill up the measure of their iniquity, so that when the Lord cometh, the blood of all the prophets which has been shed from the foundation of the world, shall be required of this generation. To the godly and believing, the day of the Lord, although accompanied by such a manifestation of His great power and glory as shall at the first alarm them, yet it is their Lord and Master, and they will hear the still small voice, saying in each one of their hearts,

"Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." This will be an abundant source of comfort to every believer. "Fear not;" dismiss your alarm, be not affrighted—"I am the first and the last;" I am from everlasting to everlasting; I am He for whom and by whom are all things, the beginning and the ending of the creation of God—"I am he that liveth and was dead;" I am the resurrection and the life; I am the Anointed, the Christ, the same despised Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified on Calvary—"Behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen;" for after having offered one sacrifice for sins, I sat down for ever on the right hand of God—"And have the keys of hell and of death;" all power is given unto me, and those desolations that are sweeping over the face of the earth are because of the cry of violence that has entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth; these are the judgments of the Lord, and when they are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world shall learn righteousness. "He laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not;" my grace is sufficient for thee; as thy day, so shall thy strength be; be not dismayed, all things shall work together for good to them who love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.

Ver. 19. "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter."

This verse is conclusive as to the actual contents of the Book of Revelation. The apostle was to "write the things which thou hast seen;" the things that are past; the counsel of Jehovah before the foundation of the world, and the portion of that counsel

already evolved in the history of the world. Also "the things which are:" those events of the same counsel that are now in progress of fulfilment. "And the things which shall be hereafter;" a prediction of all that is yet to happen, in fulfilment of that great purpose of God, known unto Himself before the foundation of the world.

Ver. 20. "The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches."

This verse contains our Lord's own explanation of the application of the figures used. Jesus is here represented in His twofold relation to angels and men. The angels are in His right hand; and this figure conveys the idea of their being in some way employed by Him in His government of the world; they are a living sceptre in the right hand of the King of kings; they are His ministers. It is said, there are seven stars: this no doubt means all the stars, all the heavenly host. They sustain a relation to the churches, for they are the angels of the seven churches. This is an incidental testimony in favour of the opinion that the number of angels and men is equal. Another passage of Scripture explains the important office angels are deputed to perform to men. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. i. 14.) It is, however, a work so mighty and so great that the Lord Himself continually superintends and controls it. The seven golden candlesticks are the seven churches, and He is in the midst of them always, even unto the end of the world.

CHAPTER X.

We now come to the consideration of what the Lord Jesus was pleased to communicate to the apostle John to write unto the churches. These epistles are of infinite value. No other writings of Scripture possess a greater practical importance in the present day. It is true, they were strictly, and no doubt literally, applicable to the case of those for whom they were originally intended; but their great design was to prefigure the state of the churches of Christ at the time when the mystery of God should be made plain; and in this sense they come to us as a prediction of what would be the aspect of the churches in the last time preceding the manifestation of the glory of the Lord on our earth; and they possess the intrinsic merit of being couched in terms of kind remonstrance, affectionate warning, and earnest exhortation to present duty. This is a part of the Revelation which I would fain have passed over; and not until I saw that its whole aim was one of mercy and not of judgment, did I feel a willingness to enter upon its illustration. I trembled lest I should inadvertently place myself forward as the judge of my christian brethren, each one of whom is equally precious in the sight of my Redeemer as myself; and to whom alone, and to no other, are we each accountable. Knowing the

infirmities of our common nature, I shrank from the illustration of what must give pain to many; and it grieved me to contemplate the probability of wounding the feelings of some, with whom I shall dwell for ever in the Lord. My heart is sad; God alone may ever know with what anguish of soul every step of my way has been taken in this all-important work. I am filled with grief when I think that there are many, alas! alas! very many of my fellow-men to whom I am the messenger of wo, and that because they will not believe what the Scripture saith. I am sustained, however, by the comforting hope that all God's children, every one, will hear God's word, because they know their master's voice; and although at first they shall be sorrowful in part, because of the things that are told them, which flesh and blood cannot receive, for they are painful unto them, yet that Master whose they are, and whom they serve, can and will enlighten them; they may have sorrow, but it shall soon be turned into joy, and their joy no man can take from them.

There is one epistle written unto each one of the seven churches. There is little doubt that each epistle contains a tolerably accurate description of a particular section of the christian church. I rather incline to the opinion, however, that the seven epistles give a representation of the general condition of all the churches of Christ in the present day. That within each section congregations will be found corresponding to what is said of each of the churches; and that within each congregation individuals will be found corresponding in like manner; so that what Christ has written unto one, He has written unto all. These words repeated at the end of each epistle, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the

churches," plainly teach that all are concerned in what is said to each; and while I believe the use of the singular number, "he that hath an ear," has a special application, I am also persuaded it includes every individual member of all the churches, to whom Christ gives the hearing ear and the understanding heart. Let me then entreat every one to look at himself and his own; the time is short, and they who may be unwise enough to occupy it in scanning the faults of others, may find in the end that it would have been better for them the light had never appeared. Let every man examine for himself, be fully persuaded in his own mind, prove all things, hold fast that which is good.

Chap. ii., ver. 1. "Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write."

These words are the introduction to each of the seven epistles; and they contain, under a figure, important truth. They indicate, no doubt, a recognition of the christian ministry. The angel of the church is the minister of the church. Upon this point all obscurity is removed, for in the epistle to the church of Thyatira, at the 24th verse of this same chapter, the angel or minister is addressed by himself, and the other believers afterwards:—"but unto you I say, and the rest in Thyatira." There is something very instructive in the figure used. Although the angels are represented in the same verse under the figure of seven stars, it is not said, unto the star of the church of Ephesus, write. It may seem an unimportant distinction which our Lord has made in selecting the figure of an angel instead of the figure of a star. In other parts of Scripture, two in particular, where, probably, faithful ministers are contrasted with their brethren in the Lord, they are repre-

sented under the figure of stars. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." (Dan. xii. 3.) Speaking of the resurrection, the apostle Paul says, that then "one star differeth from another star in glory." (1 Cor. xv. 41.) There is obviously a reason for the substitution of the figure of an angel in the addresses to the churches, instead of the figure of a star, as in the cases quoted. It is remarkable, that where the figure of a star is used, the state of glory after the resurrection of the body is referred to. The body is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body; for there is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. The figure of an angel, who is a ministering spirit to the heirs of salvation, is used when the present probationary state is referred to—and how full of meaning is the figure. The Lord foreknowing the melancholy tendency of even good men, has thus strikingly taught the true nature of the office of a christian minister, and his relation to Christ and the church. From whom does an angel receive his commission to go forth as a ministering spirit? From Christ alone. From no other can any man receive a commission to preach the everlasting gospel. True: men cannot now hear the human voice of their Lord saying unto them by name, Go and preach the gospel; but every divinely authorised minister has the witness within himself, not less sure, not less confirming, than the apostles had who heard their Master's voice. This heavenly warrant is not transmitted by one man to another. One angel does not transmit his commission to another; but Christ holds them all in His own right hand. So it is with christian ministers. They who have no other evidence to satisfy themselves of

their heavenly calling, but the laying on of human hands, be they ever so holy, have much need now to examine their credentials, for verily the axe is laid unto the root of the trees. An angel, being a spirit, has a nature distinct and separate from those worldly influences with which he may be brought into contact in the course of his ministry to the saints. He cannot, and would not if he could, ally himself with any of the carnal institutions that pertain exclusively to the things of this earth —to the present state of being. So a christian minister must have a spirit widely different from the spirit of this world; and, while preaching the gospel, he must keep his body under, lest he become a castaway. I know not what to say here. How many of Christ's own servants have allied themselves with carnal and worldly institutions? Instead of keeping the charge of the Master's house as committed to them, they have allied themselves with human governments, and made themselves and the church of Christ, which He hath bought with His own blood, mere state machines; thus placing God's house under a yoke of bondage, prefigured in the early ages of the church's history, by the bondage of Israel in Egypt. I entreat ye who love the Lord, to consider this matter. Ye are the angels of the churches. Imitate then the angels, and separate yourselves from every influence, and break off from every alliance with earthly things; for be assured they who hesitate in this matter now will provoke the anger of Him, whose wrath when kindled but a little, it is said, "blessed are all they that put their trust in him:" (Psal. ii. 12:) and trust in Christ there cannot be where a christian minister trusts in an arm of flesh. Trust not in princes. "Thus saith the Lord, cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and

maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is." (Jer. xvii. 5—7.) An angel in the course of his ministry is himself unseen and unknown by those for whom he is a ministering spirit; so in like manner, in all his ministrations, the true christian minister knows nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. It is his meat and his drink to do his Master's will: for him to live is Christ; and to his heart it is the most bitter of all possible reflections, if at any time he has been tempted to make himself known, when witnessing for the Master. Being forewarned of the tendency of men to worship the creature more than the Creator, his whole aim is, by a life and a conversation becoming the gospel, to testify against it; and feeling the peculiar danger of his office, he watches and prays with daily increasing earnestness, to be preserved from the sin of loving the praise of men more than the praise of God. An angel receives his first commission, but he also needs continual direction from his Divine Master. He goes to do only what the Lord bids him, but he goes and does it all. In this respect I desire to magnify the office of a christian minister. High, solemn, and all-important are his duties. Great, oh! great is his responsibility. He comes forth from sabbath to sabbath the messenger of the Most High God. He is like an angel; his Divine Master holds him in His right hand. The people to whom he preaches are those for whose souls he must watch as one who shall give an account. What he speaks and what they hear has its fruit, if not in time, in the belief unto salvation, without fail in eternity, as a seal of condemnation. The preparation of his own heart is from God. The Lord

who knoweth the hearts of those to whom he is to preach, and who knoweth the circumstances of all who shall be brought to hear him speak, can alone provide him with a suitable and seasonable message. Ah! would ministers but remember theirs is a tremendous power; not a power of authority, for there is no man master in any sense, even the most limited, but Christ Himself; not a power personally, for they are but earthen vessels, and are in no respect different in their nature from those to whom they preach; not a power officially, for their office is the office of a servant, and if in any thing they differ, it will be well for them if that difference consist in nothing but the depth of their humility, and the comparative greatness of their sufferings as christians. Still theirs is a peculiar position; they are ambassadors for Christ pleading with men, "be ye reconciled to God;" they are the savour of life unto life to them that believe, and they are the savour of death unto death in them that perish. Every time they preach they may be instrumental in converting a sinner from the error of his ways, and saving a soul from death. Every time they preach they may seal the eternal doom of a being immortal like themselves. Through their instrumentality the Almighty God is, in these last days, by the outpouring of His Holy Spirit and a preached gospel, to awaken His church to a sense of her danger, and a knowledge of her duty. Through their instrumentality, oh! hear it ye ministers of the Lord, holiness and happiness are to circle earth around. Oh! awake, awake, ye ministering spirits; separate yourselves from every thing that impedes the onward and rapid progress of Messiah's reign. Seek Him who is your only refuge. Call upon Him who alone can

guide and direct your ways. Ask, and it shall be given you. Ye who are the Lord's remembrancers, oh! give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

Christian ministers are not the only parties represented under the figure of the angel of the church. They are addressed, but not exclusively. They are addressed, but not representatively. The contents of the epistles, while they prove that christian ministers are specially spoken to by our Lord, also show, that the whole christian community is addressed, and each individual thereof appealed to, as if he alone were the object of the Redeemer's solicitude. Unto the angel of the church in Smyrna it is said, "behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried." (Ver. 10.) Unto the angel of the church in Pergamos it is said, "in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you." (Ver. 13.) Both these passages prove, by the use of the plural number, and the circumstances to which they relate, that our Lord was speaking to the whole body of the christian people, so that all are represented under the figure of the angel of the church, as well as the minister. In another part of the Revelation the same figure is used, but its application is to the wicked. "And they had a king over them, the angel of the bottomless pit." (Rev. ix. 11.) This is precisely a parallel use of the figure, descriptive of the great destroyer himself, but also including all in the bottomless pit. Its meaning obviously is, that the spirit which prevailed in the bottomless pit is the spirit which works in those who are described in the same chapter under the figure of locusts. This is that of which the apostle Paul speaks

when he says, "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." (Eph. ii. 2.) The idea intended to be conveyed under the figure of the angel of the church, seems to be, that the Lord commands the apostle John to write unto the whole mind, and every individual spirit in the church. Not only does the figure of the angel of the church show the relation of the minister individually to Christ and the church, but it further teaches, very plainly, the manner in which he is to serve his Master and the church, and also, the relation which every member of the body bears to the Head. If angels or spirits are to be dealt with, then "the weapons of warfare are not carnal, but (spiritual,) mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." (2 Cor. x. 4, 5.) "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John iv. 24.) The only command given to ministers is, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season: reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering." (2 Tim. iv. 2.) The minister when he preaches draws a bow at a venture. He knows not whether the arrow of truth shall pierce any hearts among his hearers. He often, yea, if he is a faithful minister, he will always sow in tears, amid much fear and trembling; but he will sow in faith by the side of all waters, for he knoweth that his own spirit, and the spirits of all men, are in the right hand of the Lord. No influence of any kind must be used in the endeavour to convert sinners, or build up the faithful, except a preached gospel. The only weapon put into the hand of christian ministers is the sword of the Spirit, the word of God. In

the use of it, a Paul may plant, and an Apollos may water, but God alone giveth the increase. The spirits of men must be moved by the preaching of the word; and all appeals must be from the spirit of the preacher, to the spirit of the hearers; and even when this is done, still it is not by might, nor by power, that sinners are persuaded, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord. Both minister and people must recognise their personal relation to Christ. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth; that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ." (1 Peter iv. 11.) And he that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith. In speaking and in hearing, God must be all in all. The minister is answerable to God for his own faith, and he must also give account to Him of the spirit and manner in which he has preached unto others. He is not responsible for the faith of any who hear him; and he has no power, but is rather expressly forbidden, to judge of the faith of another. He must declare the whole counsel of God, as revealed in His word; this done, he must commit his hearers unto the Lord, for unto Him belong the issues of life and death. "So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul." (Ezek. xxxiii. 7—9.) An earnest ministry and

a praying people are the peculiar wants of the present time. God grant both in His infinite goodness and mercy, that each may know their true spiritual relation to one another—that ministers of all denominations may cease, in the most modified form, the attempt to lord it over God's heritage; that the people, knowing that by faith they stand, may give earnest heed to the things which they hear, lest at any time they let them slip, and only believe when, like the noble Bereans, they search the Scriptures, and find these things are so. Thus will the faith of every man be built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone. Thus, all "speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love." (Eph. iv. 15, 16.)

Ver. 1—3. "These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted."

It will be found that the manner in which the Lord manifests Himself to each church, congregation, and individual, will correspond exactly to their state. To the church at Ephesus He reveals Himself as "He that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the golden candlesticks;" as if He had

said, when commending them for what they had done, "by grace ye are what ye are:" and when reproving their backsliding, reminding them that "His grace was sufficient for them, and His strength made perfect in weakness." This view of the Lord is designed to teach all whose state is described in what is written unto the church of Ephesus, not to boast of what they are, or what they have done, because separate from Christ they could do nothing; and it is further an encouragement to amendment of what is wrong, for if they ask, the Lord will give them liberally and upbraid them not. "I know:" what a cheering thought to every sincere follower of Christ! The Lord Himself declares, all that is past and present of your life, conduct, and circumstances, He knows. Let this awaken every believer to continual watchfulness, lest he enter into temptation. "Thy works:" that is, the fruits of thy faith, the blossoms of heavenly grace which adorn thy christian character. The works here spoken of have an exclusive reference to the conduct and conversation of believers—to the manner in which they acquit themselves of their various responsibilities in the several stations of life in which the Lord may have placed them. The Saviour here means every believer to understand Him to say—"I know the whole course of thy daily life; when thou art alone, I am with thee; when thou art in thy family, I am with thee; when thou art following thy worldly calling, I am with thee; I know the anxiety of thy spirit, the earnestness of thy soul to please me at all times, and in all things: I know thy works."—"And thy labour:" that is, the many difficulties thou hast encountered, and art now encountering, in thy ceaseless endeavour to live a godly life. I know the inward con-

flicts of thy soul, the greatness of thy labour contending with the corruptions of thine own heart. I know the wiles of the wicked one, against which you have had to struggle, and the great sorrow they have caused thee. I know those afflictions and distresses that have been laid upon thee—in thy person, in thy family, and in thy worldly circumstances, and the labour they have given thee in maintaining thy steadfastness to me. "And I know thy patience:" that is, the confidence thou hadst in me, which caused thee to bear all, and continue still in hope. "And how thou canst not bear them which are evil:" that is, thy spirit is so tender that thou art pained and grieved with the workers of iniquity. "And thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:" that is, you have obeyed, each for himself, the apostolic precept which saith, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world." (1 John iv. 1.) Ye tried the spirits, by taking what they said and comparing it with the law and with the testimony. "And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted." The repetition of these things is intended to distinguish the twofold duty of christians —the first having reference to the walk of christians in the world, to the manner in which they perform all the duties arising out of their relationship to the present life, such as masters and servants, husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters, friends and acquaintances—the last having reference to their labours as members of the church, for the church of Christ in the world; their efforts to spread the knowledge of the gospel; their zeal in all the service of the house of God.

The application of what our Lord says is to christians as members of a civil community, and as members of a christian society. He looks for fruits of both kinds, and He commends those who labour with patience in both spheres.

Ver. 4, 5. "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

That must be a serious defect which endangers the very existence of a church, the members of which are spoken of previously in terms of no ordinary commendation by the Lord Himself. The fault is, "Thou hast left thy first love." It is somewhat remarkable that the apostle Paul begins his epistle to the Ephesians by telling them, among other things, that "they were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy, and without blame before him in love." (Eph. i. 4.) In the same epistle he breathes a prayer, "that they may be rooted and grounded in love," and that they may "know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge;" (Eph. iii. 17, 19;) and its concluding words are, "Grace be with them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." To the church of Ephesus it was a great reproach, when thus exhorted by letter from the apostle of the only ground of acceptance in the Beloved, that they should have left their first love.

Two very important practical truths are taught us from these words in these days. It is worthy of notice that there must have been doctrinal controversies among them, theological disputes, for it is said, "thou hast tried

them which say they are apostles and are not, and hast found them liars." It is the duty of every christian church, and of every individual christian, to try every doctrine whether it be of God. But it is a most difficult duty to perform, and, alas! is rarely done in a spirit of christian love. May it not be very probable that our Lord, in this epistle, predicts the unhappy state of the churches in the present day, much of the division and disunion which prevail being clearly traceable to the strifes and contentions occasioned by doctrinal disputes? There is this great difference between the case of the church of Ephesus and the churches of the present day: our Lord says Himself, those with whom they contended were liars; whereas now, those who have carried on this unseemly warfare have been brethren in the Lord, both disputants holding the truth, and both too frequently wielding the truth against the truth. The controversies of this kind have been too abundant, and the result is the destruction of our love to the brethren, which Christ tells us is the surest evidence of our love to Himself. Within particular sections of the church, affection no doubt does prevail, and it is to be hoped in no small measure, towards brethren of the same denomination. This, however, is only brotherly kindness, to which must be added charity, that is, love to all Christ's people of whatever denomination. Be persuaded to cease contending about points of difference, when in so many things essential all agree; or if your vocation seem to be that of contending for the truth, do it in love—admit the possibility of your being yourself in error—give to your brother that privilege which you justly claim for yourself, the right to hold those views of truth which he conscientiously regards as the mind of Christ revealed in

the Scriptures. "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." (Eph. iv. 31, 32.) In order to enforce this duty with peculiar emphasis, our Lord declares that though our works, our labour, our patience, and our zeal be all commendably great, still if we lack love, we are in that state that except we repent our candlestick will be removed. This is what we are also told by the inspired apostle in his epistle to the Corinthians. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge: and though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. And now abideth faith, hope, charity: but the greatest of these is charity." (1 Cor. xiii. 1—3, 13.) It need not surprise us that Christ should say that the falling from our first love endangers our very existence as christians; and they who, zealous for the Lord's cause, neglect the special culture of this particular grace, which is called the golden girdle of the glorified body of Christ, would do well to cease from every avocation in following after which they are tempted to despise a christian brother. It is pleasing to observe that the Lord's warning is designed for our profit; it is as if He had said, "all that is past is forgiven thee; repent now; change your mode of thinking of others; your manner of acting towards them;

imitate my perfect example. Oh, consider that if I dealt with you, knowing as I do your secret sins and many shortcomings, in the same spirit thou art dealing with thy brother, of whom thou art comparatively ignorant, what should be thy state? Learn a lesson from me; if I have borne with him, because I love him, these many years; wilt thou not bear with him, the more especially that the reason of thy coldness is thy professed zeal for me? I tell thee, I, thy great Redeemer, thou wouldst honour me, and honour me greatly, and fulfil my heart's desire, if thou wouldst love thy brother as thou professest to love me. Then zeal for my truth would be restrained, and its manifestation kept within safe limits by the strength of your affection for the brethren. I tell thee it is dishonouring to me, when at any time thou violatest one law, the great law of my house, in your eagerness to maintain intact another; and although you do not think it, your conduct has more the resemblance of that which proceeds from a heart of conscious self-sufficiency, than that which proceeds from a meek and lowly mind deeply in earnest about my glory. Let brotherly love continue."

Ver. 6. "But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate."

This verse gives a marvellous display of the kindness and tenderness of the Reedemer's heart. He commences the epistle with a commendation, and lest his people should have grief overmuch, he concludes it by again commending them. He is the great physician. He never wounds but to heal, and all His ways are full of goodness to His own. Be encouraged, fear not, ye who believe; our Redeemer knoweth our infirmities, for He partook of flesh and blood, and was in all points tempted

as we are, yet without sin. The deeds of the Nicolaitanes are said to be hated by the church of Ephesus. There is no trace of any sect of that particular name in Scripture, and church history does not furnish any satisfactory evidence upon the point. In so far as the Ephesian church was concerned, the obvious design of the passage was to give them encouragement, by an assurance, that although they had left their first love, still their hatred of evil had not diminished; so that I incline to the opinion, that the word, "Nicolaitanes," was used in thier case, conveying to their minds a ground of encouragement, without reference to any particular sect at that time in existence under that name. This may or may not be the case; it is, however, unquestionable, that above and beyond its application to the church of Ephesus, it does apply to the state of the churches in the present day, and clearly predicts the introduction of a state of matters in the visible church, peculiarly offensive to our Divine Master, for the deeds are those which I hate, saith the Lord. The very mystery of the language used in the description of the deeds gives to the verse in its predictive aspect, considerable importance. In subsequent verses we have the doctrine of Balaam mentioned, and the woman Jezebel. Both of these have an existence in the Old Testament Scriptures. The doctrine of the Nicolaitanes is also mentioned in a subsequent part of the chapter. The fact of the latter being twice referred to, and the other two only once, would seem to indicate its primary importance. The term, "Nicolaitanes," seems to be a figurative term, and therefore furnishes no means of arriving at the correct interpretation of the passage. What the name itself does not supply, our Lord's declaration,

"which I also hate," furnishes. It will be admitted that the deeds spoken of must be deeds which parties professing to be christians have done or will do. It cannot be the gross violations of the moral law. Our Lord would scarcely record a commendation of His people for hating deeds of flagrant vice, which should not be so much as named among them. The fact that it is called the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes in the 15th verse, is confirmatory of the opinion, that our Lord refers to a doctrine and practices resulting therefrom, which either had then, or would shortly manifest themselves in the church. It is well to observe, that our Lord does not say He hates the men who hold the doctrine; it is the doctrine itself and the deeds which are its inevitable consequence that He hates; so that, in the illustration which follows, it must not for a moment be imagined, that the parties who hold and act upon the doctrine are necessarily the objects of the Redeemer's hatred. On the contrary, He hates the doctrine and the deeds, because of the dishonour they occasion to Himself, and the injury they inflict upon His people who are under their sway. It would appear that Esau is a personification of this doctrine and these deeds, for it is said of him, "I hated Esau." (Mal. i. 3.) If this be so, then Jacob must be a personification of the very opposite doctrine and practice, for the Lord saith, "I love Jacob." (Mal. i. 2.) The sin of Esau is thus spoken of by the apostle Paul:—"Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright." (Heb. xii. 16.) The offence of Esau is very distinctly stated, he sold his birthright for a morsel of meat; that this is the deed which Christ hates is beyond all doubt: Esau despised the blessing, which,

as the elder brother, was his inheritance; he sold it for a morsel of meat. The apostle Paul quotes Esau's case as a warning, and describes him as a fornicator or profane person: it is evident the conduct of Esau has a spiritual application, for only in that sense could his conduct be called fornication; and, properly speaking, it can only be called profane when contrasted with what is sacred and religious. There is no obscurity as to what the apostle meant by this allusion to Esau's conduct; immediately preceding it he writes thus: "looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled." This passage has the double virtue of being a prediction as well as a warning; for the root of bitterness has sprung up, and for the sake of those troubled by it, I do hope it may be said of them that they are defiled, but not destroyed; that they are still at heart God's people, although they have failed in this matter. Jacob's vision of the ladder set up on the earth, whose top reached to heaven, and his resolution consequent thereon, give an exact representation of the opposite doctrine and deeds. Jacob on that occasion typified the christian church going forth on her mission of mercy to a perishing world, and the promise to her from God is, "behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." (Gen. xxviii. 15.) The heavenly birthright of the christian church, and of every christian, includes all needful things for the sustenance of life; for your Father knoweth ye have need of these things, and they are added unto you. The sacredness of the church, and the necessity of its com-

plete and entire separation from every worldly influence, is prefigured in these words, "And Jacob said, Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." (Gen. xxviii. 16, 17.) The duty of God's people, and the source from which the church obtains support, is plainly taught in Jacob's vow:—"And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God: and this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee." (Gen. xxviii. 20—22.) The duty of the church is to confide in the Lord for its present support; Jacob's vow teaches this duty, and also points out the divinely appointed manner in which it will be supported, that is, by the offerings of God's people. The teaching of Moses and the prophets, Christ and the apostles, is uniform upon this point. The tabernacle erected in the wilderness is a type of the christian church in its present state, and this is the command concerning it, "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering." (Exod. xxv. 1, 2.) This is the account of their compliance with this command, "And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the Lord's offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments. And they

came, both men and women, as many as were willing-hearted." . . . . "The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the Lord, every man and woman, whose heart made them willing to bring, for all manner of work which the Lord had commanded to be made by the hand of Moses." (Exod. xxxv. 21, 22, 29.) Whoso reads the account of this transaction, cannot avoid the conclusion, that God's service must be performed from the heart, and with the will of every worshipper. The support of the ordinances of religion rests entirely with the worshippers, and their gifts if constrained at all, must be a moral constraint, even the constraining power of divine love. An unwilling offering God will neither accept nor bless. Just as Jacob setting out upon his journey was a type of the christian church sent forth upon her mission of mercy to the world, so was the erection of the tabernacle in the wilderness a type of the same church, during its existence in the wilderness of this world; and if these were the only passages of Scripture in which reference was made to this matter, it would be difficult to show that they did not expressly prohibit compulsion, in the manner of supporting religion, as well as teach the duty of every man and woman to give willingly towards this object. There is, however, no lack of testimony upon this point. When our Saviour sent out His twelve disciples to preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand, among other things, He said unto them, "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses; nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat." (Matt. x. 9, 10.) When the Lord afterwards "appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his

face into every city and place whither he himself would come." He said unto them, "Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes; and salute no man by the way. And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it, if not, it shall turn to you again. And in the same house remain eating and drinking such things as they give; for the labourer is worthy of his hire." (Luke x. 1, 4—7.) All the teachings and doings of our Lord recorded in Scripture are intended for our instruction. It will be found that every parable He uttered, and every thing He did, the record of which we have in the gospels, contain illustrations of important practical truth. The sending out of His disciples, first the twelve, and then the seventy, are cases of this description. It is said Jesus sent them before His face into every city and place whither He Himself would come. From this we learn, that they who receive their commission from Christ to preach His gospel, are accompanied by Himself whithersoever they go. They were forbidden to make provision for their journey. The language used by our Lord is so particular and minute that its meaning can scarcely be misunderstood. "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass," He said, "nor scrip, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves." They were to trust in God wholly for food, raiment, and protection. They were to salute no man by the way; the meaning of which is, not that they were to be uncivil or uncourteous to any man, for our Saviour elsewhere says, "If ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not the publicans so?" (Mat. v. 47.) The use of these words in connection with an allusion to their own sup-

port and maintenance, plainly teaches, that in respect of the things needful in this life, they were not to be under obligation to any for their supply. After this caution they are then informed, that those to whom they preach will provide for their wants; and He lays down the broad principle upon which this duty rests,— "the labourer is worthy of his hire." The idea of a permanent provision for the christian ministry by human endowments of any kind, is strongly discountenanced in Scripture. The passages just quoted obviously show what the mind of Christ is. His servants must ever look unto Himself, praying day by day as it were, Lord give us our daily bread. The reason for this is obvious. The Saviour says, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Mat. vi. 19, 21.) Who does not know by painful experience, how prone the heart of man is to be content with a portion in this life; and every christian must acknowledge the truth and the wisdom of the Saviour's admonition. But He goes on to show very plainly that concern about even the actual wants of the present life is incompatible with God's service. "No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." The word Mammon is used in relation to food and raiment, those things which we have need of, and not to the accumulation of wealth and riches. Our Lord is instructing His disciples, and is warning them against those cares and anxieties concerning the present life, which bring with them a snare; and He concludes by saying, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto

you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." (Mat. vi. 33, 34.) Our Lord's plan was successful in the days of His flesh, for we find Him afterwards saying unto the disciples, "When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing." (Luke xxii. 35.) True, He then counsels them, saying, "He that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip; and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one." But this was not a preparation to go and preach the gospel. It was the hour and the power of darkness, such an hour as shall only once come again at the end of the world: and before His ascension to heaven, He repeated His command, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." He prefaces His command by informing His disciples, "that all power was given unto Him in heaven and in earth." (Mat. xxviii. 18—20.) The will of Christ unquestionably is, that His ministers be in a position of constant dependence upon Himself, and that their support be derived from the freewill-offerings of those among whom they labour. The nature of a christian church, and the nature of all christian duty, confirms this view of truth. A christian church is a society separated from the world, to show forth the glory of the Redeemer; and because it is so, it cannot be dependent upon any earthly power. To the extent that it is so dependent, it ceases to be a church of Christ. Christian duty cannot be performed

without the concurrence of the human will, and no act of that will in the least degree constrained by earthly considerations, can be acceptable unto God. The motive to christian exertion is love to Christ, and each man will be judged according to his own words and works. If he be faithful when all around him are faithless, he will be blessed. If he be faithless when all around him are faithful, he will be condemned.

When a christian church ceases to trust exclusively in the Redeemer, and takes support from earthly governments under any pretence whatever, it violates the law of Christ's house. By such an act, although they could maintain their entire freedom from secular control, the church practically declares a want of confidence in Christ Himself. A principle is introduced subversive of the interests of christianity; for however well-intentioned and disinterested the act of the donors, the effect upon the church is paralysing and destructive. The people's liberality, the true source of the support of God's house, is gradually dried up, and they cease to regard it as their highest privilege and chief duty to contribute of their substance cheerfully and willingly for the support and spread of the gospel. It is to be feared, however, that this is only one of many evil consequences, the result of this principle. Earthly governments have too frequently looked upon the church of the glorious Redeemer as a convenient medium through which with greater ease to carry on their schemes of policy, and thus grievously wrong themselves, and defile that church which Christ hath purchased with His own blood. The history of this principle proves that great dishonour has been done to Christ through its operation. Men have been accustomed to regard ecclesiastics as a kind of scourge—a

class of men who are the enemies of human liberty, and with whose labours only one aim is associated, that of aggrandizing what is called the church, though all other interests should be perilled in its accomplishment. There is something very significant in these words. "I the Lord love judgment: I hate robbery for burnt-offering." (Isa. lxi. 8.) They form part of a prediction which refers to these very times, and can it be questioned that the robbery here referred to, is the appropriation of the funds of a nation against the will of a large number of that nation towards the support of the house of God? and this the Lord hates; and this is a deed of the Nicolaitanes. Will any sincere christian say that the offering of an infidel would be accepted by God? "Without faith it is impossible to please Him." And shall it be said that contributions levied by force of the civil sword in some instances, because of the unwillingness of those so coerced to give—contributions from a fund collected under a penalty, and for purposes of civil government—grants made of the money of those who condemn its appropriation to such a purpose—shall it be said that such support given to Christ's church, even with the best intentions towards that church on the part of the rulers—can the saying be endured, that such is the heavenly working of a divine and holy institution? Ah! is it not truly robbery for a burnt-offering, which I hate, saith the Lord? But the evil rests not here. Esau sold his birthright; the elder was made the servant of the younger. How truly typical of what has happened to Christ's church! There are, so to speak, twin brothers: heaven, the church of God; earth, the governments of men; the church the superior, human governments the inferior institution, brought into existence for the sake

of the church. For a morsel of meat the church has sold its birthright, and is in the position of the slave of the younger brother. The house of God is profaned—Jesus is dishonoured—His people grievously injured—His gospel impeded in its spread—the progress of His kingdom arrested—the faith of men shaken—the prayers of believers dull and heartless—the exertions of the faithful weak and disunited—the christian name is become the scoff of an infidel world; and all is to be traced to that evil principle of trusting in an arm of flesh; for what Jesus has said we shall not want if we look to Him.

There has been much angry controversy upon this point. I have not one word to say offensive to any man. Matters, however, must now be looked in the face. The times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord are at length come. Britain, oh! Britain, thou hast sinned in this respect against thy God. Thou hast and art still keeping in bondage the house of Israel. The time of deliverance is near. Thine is a noble mission. God might have come, and by social and political convulsions, similar to those that have and are yet to scatter to the winds the power of other nations, so destroyed thee and delivered His church. A more merciful purpose is cherished towards thee; thy destiny is, even with all thy faults, to show forth the glory of the Lord, as His peculiar people, a chosen nation in these days of trouble. The work before thee is a great one. The power to do it, and the wisdom to guide it, must be received from above. The church of Christ must be set free in this land. The time within which it must be done is limited. The year in which it must be completed is fixed. Set thy house in order, for in thy present relation to Christ's house the king's house must die and not live. It is no

doubt a solemn matter, but there is reason for thankfulness to God for sending to prepare us for the things that are coming. Let not the ministers of Christ despond, as if their loss of state-support were to annihilate the christian cause. On the contrary, it will be as life from the dead. Hear what the Scripture saith, when speaking of these very times: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." (Mal. iii. 10.) Let all ranks and conditions of men ponder these things, and the Lord grant the hearing ear, and the understanding heart, for the time is at hand.

Ver. 7. "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

It was the sin of the Jews, when privileged with the teaching of the Lord from heaven, that their ears were dull of hearing; and the Saviour refers to this matter as a fulfilment of what was prophesied by Isaiah, when he said, "Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not." (Isa. vi. 9.) "These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him." (John xii. 41.) The vision which Isaiah saw, and which is recorded in the 6th chapter of his prophecy, was a vision of the glory of Christ. "In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims; each one had six wings; with

twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke." (Isa. vi. 1—4.) The dulness of hearing was to continue until the time of the manifestation of the glory of the Lord upon the earth. "In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in." (Isa. xxvi. 1, 2.) "Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment. And a man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim; and the ears of them that hear shall hearken. The heart also of the rash shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly. The vile person shall be no more called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful." (Isa. xxxii. 1—5.) The hearing ear is thus promised; and let each remember to him it is said, If you have an ear, hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches—"Him that overcometh:" this language teaches that the christian warfare is a personal work, begun and wrought in each individual for and by himself. These words, in the present instance, have a particular reference to the two evils named in the epistle, especially the latter, "the deeds of the Nicolaitanes." The promise annexed proves this, for the Lord says, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life,

which is in the midst of the paradise of God." "He that hath the Son hath life, he that hath not the Son hath not life." (1 John v. 12.) Christ says of Himself, "I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." (John vi. 48—51.) Christ teaches that He is Himself the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God. He also explains that the manna from heaven by which the Israelites were sustained during their journeyings in the wilderness, was a type of Himself, the true bread. A mixed multitude went up with them out of the land of Egypt. These became a snare to the chosen people. It is written, "And the mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic: but now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, besides this manna, before our eyes." (Num. xi. 4—6.) They despised the provision God had made for their sustenance in their journey through the wilderness to the promised land. It is a parallel case to those who do the deeds of the Nicolaitanes under the christian dispensation. They despise Christ's provision, and the liberty wherewith He maketh His people free, and choose rather the good things of Egypt with its bondage. The anger of the Lord was kindled against the Israelites. I hate the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, saith the

Lord. The tree of life grew in the midst of the garden of Eden, and of that tree man, when created, might freely eat. When he sinned, God said, "Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also the tree of life, and eat and live for ever. So he drove out the man: and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims, and a flaming sword, which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." (Gen. iii. 22, 24.) The sin of man when he partook of the forbidden fruit, was unbelief. The sin of the Israelites who fell in the wilderness was also unbelief. This is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith. It would appear that the tree of life cannot be approached except by faith. It is a remarkable saying, that if Adam had been allowed to put forth his hand, and take also the tree of life, and eat, he would have lived for ever. I rather fear the explanation of these words is a solemn warning to any who continue doing the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, after they receive the knowledge of the truth concerning them. The apostle Paul throws some light upon this passage when he says, "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away to renew them again unto repentance." (Heb. vi. 4—6.) This would have been Adam's case had he partaken of the fruit of the tree of life in a state of unbelief; so that it was great mercy which God showed to him when He drove him out of the garden, and guarded the tree of life. This is the sin against the Holy Ghost. That state of

mind and kind of life which crucifies the Son of God afresh, and puts Him to an open shame. It was the very sin of Esau, and is the very substance of the apostle's warning grounded upon Esau's conduct; for he says, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." (Heb. xii. 14—17.) The sin of Esau was the deliberate contempt of his birthright, the value he placed upon it being manifested in his exchanging it for a morsel of meat. He knew the promise made to Abraham and to his father Isaac. He knew that in the seed of Isaac all nations of the earth would be blessed. Abraham and Isaac believed what God said, and it was counted to them for righteousness. Esau believed not, and because of his unbelief he despised his birthright. Those who know not God's will in regard to His church in this respect, but who believe all they know of God, and act up rigidly to their knowledge, their sin is a sin of ignorance, and God has graciously said when it is felt and acknowledged He will pardon it. It is very different with those who know the truth, but who like Esau will not believe it, because their hearts are set upon the present world. The rich young man would not have had sin if Christ had not said to him, "Sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me." (Matt. xix. 21.)

But from the moment he heard that saying, his state was very different. Eternal life was offered to him; treasure in heaven was promised him. He deliberately preferred the riches of the world to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven. He made his choice: he despised the heavenly kingdom. When the truth is made plain, when Christ's will is declared, when the alternative presents itself to a human mind, having on the one hand the things which perish with the using and on the other the heavenly inheritance — when the mind through unbelief of the truth cleaves to the world, and rejects the heavenly promise—when the mind refuses to part with all in order to follow Christ, then it is that the state supervenes which would have been Adam's had he been permitted to eat of the tree of life in a state of unbelief; he would have lived for ever an unbeliever. These are times of sifting and times of trial. "The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap: and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." (Mal. iii. 1—3.) It is very remarkable that the manner of presenting an offering to the Lord is so very frequently introduced as connected with the fiery trial that will precede the latter day glory of the church in this world. Those who love the Lord in sincerity, whatever their present position, have nothing to fear. My hope is great that many, very

many who have been evil spoken of, among other things, for their alliance with the governments of this world, will be found, when the crisis comes, the true seed of Israel. It will be a noble spectacle when ministers of Christ now in connection with the state, after a calm, solemn, and prayerful deliberation upon the course of duty which God in His providence is pointing out to them, resolve, in a spirit of humility and trust in Christ, to separate themselves for ever from such an alliance. It will be a great sight to witness godly bishops and pious ministers consulting together upon the measures that will effect the emancipation of the church, without injury to the state, without confusion to society, without noise and tumult. Then will the reproach be wiped away wherewith the world has too long reproached the christian church. Then will the brethren see eye to eye. Then will the Lord reveal Himself in His church, for they that honour Him He will honour. None will suffer actual loss, for it is the work of Christ; a work of great mercy, a work of infinite love. It must be accompanied with trial, but to all God's people the end will be peace. The miserable pittance now grudgingly doled out by a thankless, because a human master, will become the abundance which God alone can give to them that love Him. A godly and a pious people will be blessed by God; and the liberal will devise liberal things, and by liberal things shall stand. Have faith in God. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek;) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have

need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. vi. 31—33.) "For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. vi. 2.) He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

CHAPTER XI.

CHAP. ii. ver. 8. "And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich,) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan."

To the suffering church the Lord makes Himself known as the Saviour that suffered, that they may look "unto Jesus, the author and finisher of their faith; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God;" that they may "consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest they be wearied and faint in their minds." (Heb. xii. 2, 3.) "I know thy works"—that is, thy fruits unto holiness, "and tribulation"—that is, thy suffering for well-doing, "and poverty"—that is, thy scanty supply of what is needful in this life. It is comforting to be assured by the Lord, that "when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." (Isa. xliii. 2.) "But thou art rich"—that is, your affliction

yieldeth unto you the peaceable fruits of righteousness; and not only so, but ye say, "we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience; and experience hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us." (Rom. v. 3—5.) A suffering church is a church blessed above measure. To such the Redeemer gives very peculiar manifestations of His love and tenderness. "And I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan." Hypocritical professors of religion are here spoken of. Their sin is designated by our Lord blasphemy. They have named the name of Christ, but have not departed from iniquity. Men blaspheme the name of Christ when from motives of worldly prudence, or the fear of other men, they are ashamed to confess Him openly. The apostle Paul says, "I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme." (Acts xxvi. 11.) Men blaspheme when they despise poor brethren, for if they have respect of persons, they commit sin. "Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?" (James ii. 7.) A professor of religion is guilty of blasphemy when he does not honour God in all things, for they who serve and love Him, must do so with their whole heart, and they must love their neighbours as themselves. "They say they are Jews, and are not." The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, "The Lord knoweth them that are his." (2 Tim ii. 19.) "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose

glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things." (Phil. iii. 18, 19.) "But are the synagogue of Satan." The wicked one has obtained a footing within the church. He transforms himself into an angel of light; so do his children mingle themselves with the sons of God in the sanctuary. They may deceive men, but they cannot deceive the Master of the house. Christ knows His own, and He knows the blasphemy of those who profess to honour Him with their lips, when their hearts are far from Him. It is worthy of special notice, that our Lord gives no instructions to the church to search out these hypocrites, and exclude them from its communion. What He said unto the church in Smyrna, He says to all similarly circumstanced in the present day. They are assured that He knows all their circumstances, and every one of their number; but He deputes to none the power of judging any man; on the contrary, He expressly prohibits and forbids it. He declares it to be His own prerogative to judge men, for the Father hath committed all judgment to the Son. Although all must appear at the judgment seat of Christ, yet while He dwelt among men upon earth, He appeared as a servant, and said, "I judge no man." (John viii. 15.) The present state of the christian church is probationary, and the only command given by our Lord is, to preach the gospel. He came Himself not to destroy but to save men. "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." (John iii. 17.) As the Father sent Him, so has the Lord sent His disciples. They received no power or authority over other men; and in any case where either themselves or their words were rejected, all He commanded them to do was, to testify against the

parties so acting. "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city." (Mat. x. 14, 15.) The apostle Paul no doubt speaks of the authority which the Lord hath given unto ministers of the word, but he distinctly states it is given for edification, and not for destruction. It is unquestionable that the idea of superior and inferior is wholly at variance with the spirit of the christian religion. The warrant for what is called ecclesiastical authority or spiritual power, is not to be found in any part of Scripture. It matters not what garb it wears, whether that of popish intolerance, protestant prelacy, presbyterian simplicity, or congregational independency; in each and every form it is at variance with Scripture. The word of God gives to no man or body of men the shadow of a warrant for exercising authority in the church over other men. There is but one Master, and we all are servants. There is but one Lord, and we all are brethren. There is but one Judge, and we must all appear at His tribunal. Although the authority, the power, the rule, the government, (for of all these does Paul write,) could not be explained satisfactorily by any other interpretation of their meaning, Christ Himself has spoken so explicitly upon the point, as to leave no room for question. There was a strife among the first disciples which of them should be accounted the greatest. Jesus said unto them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so; but he that is greatest among you,

let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve." He further illustrates the nature of the duty which ministers of the gospel were to perform, and by the illustration he shows the incongruity of the attempt to unite authority or power with such an office. The gospel is likened unto a feast. The hearers of it sit at meat. The preachers serve the table. "For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth." (Luke xxii. 24—27.) The apostle Peter received a special commission from our Lord after His resurrection. It was very brief, but very significant. "Feed my lambs." "Feed my sheep." "Feed my sheep." Not one word about authority or power. The apostle writes unto the elders, declaring himself to be also an elder, and exhorts them "to feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." (1 Peter i. 1—3.) When he counsels the younger to submit themselves unto the elder, there is an appearance of enjoining obedience to authority; but he immediately adds, "Yea all of you be subject one to another;" for ye are all kings; "and be ye clothed with humility;" thus guarding against the tendency to seek to govern, which is inseparably associated with a carnal mind. The very sin of a carnal mind is, that it is enmity against God, is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be; and it is this state of mind that is described by the apostle Jude, when he says, they "despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities." Also by the apostle Peter, when he says, "But chiefly them that walk after the

flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and depise government." (2 Pet. ii. 10.) The dominion and government in both cases being the subjection of a man's will, not to the will or law of another man, but to the will and law of God. The apostle Peter explains this himself, for in further describing them he says, "Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities." These dignities being not earthly or human, but spiritual and angelic. In his allusions to his power or authority, the apostle Paul not only says the Lord gave it to him for edification and not for destruction, but it is obvious from the passages in which the allusions are found that it is not the power to command, neither the authority of a spiritual superior. The apostle is making mention of his writings, and his personal orations or exhortations; and there is a material difference between the authority and power of Paul's writings and teachings, as a divinely inspired apostle, and Paul's power and authority to demand from other men the submission of their will to his will; which if there be such a thing as spiritual power or ecclesiastical authority in the church, must be the case. How different from this is the teaching of the apostle himself, he claims for his gospel the authority of God and the obedience of men; but in what way does he teach men to render this obedience? not by prohibiting them from judging for themselves, not by setting up himself as a lord over God's heritage, and commanding submission. Hear the apostle for himself, "I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say." (1 Cor. x. 15.) "Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand." (2 Cor. i. 24.) In respect of one or more men becoming the judges of other men, the

Scriptures give no uncertain sound. Our Lord says, "Judge not, that ye be not judged:" and He solemnly warns those who, either ignorantly or presumptuously, place themselves in God's throne, that "with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." (Matt. vii. 1, 2.) The apostle Paul inquires, "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth; yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him to stand." (Rom. xiv. 4.) Speaking of himself, the same apostle further says, "But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord." (1 Cor. iv. 3, 4.) And of the spiritually minded he says, "He that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man." (1 Cor. ii. 15.) The apostle James very plainly points out the position in which a man is placed who assumes a spiritual superiority over his brethren. "Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge." The idea of a judicial tribunal, a court of judgment in Christ's house, is nowhere taught in the word of God, but is most expressly forbidden and condemned; and when to this is added the functions of a legislative body, the error committed is exceedingly great, for "there is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?" (James iv. 11, 12.) Christ Himself explains the nature of the power and authority given to His apostles, and to

all preachers of the truth, and ministers of the gospel. "And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." (John xii. 47, 48.) The power, the authority of the apostle Paul, and all other servants of Christ, is neither in their office nor in their person: it is like their Master in their word; when they speak the truth in love they speak with power, even with the mighty power of God, for the word of God is sharp and powerful; and in no other sense has any man the semblance of authority given him by Scripture warrant in the christian church. In admitting to its visible communion, the minister must say, with the evangelist Philip, to the applicant, not, tell me thy state of mind, thy feelings, thy desires, thy affections, and I will then know your fitness to become a member of the visible church; but rather explaining the Scripture, and preaching Jesus; then if, like the eunuch, the applicant says, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? he must reply, if not in the words, at least in the spirit of Philip, "If thou believest thou mayest." (Acts viii. 37.) Thus all the responsibility is thrown upon the man himself, and he cannot regard his admission to the church as conferring any benefit, if he have not the witness within himself. In like manner in regard to the Lord's supper: "let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." There is no occasion for guarding this ordinance with those rules of stringency which men with zeal overmuch have framed, wherewith to fence the Lord's table. By such measures, is it not manifest that

they participate in the sin of those who communicate unworthily: for whether it be intended or not, the result is not an uncommon one, that parties are only concerned to have the approving judgment of man, discerning not the Lord that bought them. Every man should be warned and exhorted. The solemnity of the ordinance should be clearly pointed out, as well as its true nature and design, as also the danger of unworthily partaking of the bread and wine; but beyond this, man has no control; and it is to be feared, that the system of admitting to the Lord's table by any token or sign of man's appointment, has a tendency to withdraw the mind of communicants from their personal and direct responsibility to God; the receiving of a token or card from a minister, elder, or deacon being by too many regarded as a sufficient warrant for their observing the Lord's supper. Such restrictions, besides being very injurious in their consequences, are wholly unnecessary. They are a gratuitous addition to God's appointment; a man is to examine himself, and if he eateth and drinketh unworthily he eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. Our Lord was jealous for His own honour in the primitive church, and the fact that, "for this cause (eating and drinking unworthily) many were weak and sickly among the christians at Corinth, and many slept," is a sufficient testimony that the Lord neither requires nor will permit the interference of man in any thing of His own appointment; and when man will intrude with his services, it is not unreasonable to expect that the Saviour will withdraw; for He saith, "I am God, and besides me there is no Saviour, and my glory I will not give to another." If men have no power to admit, they have as little warrant to exclude.

The word of God makes an important distinction when it teaches the manner in which sins and sinners are to be dealt with. It is somewhat remarkable that, in counselling the primitive christians in regard to their treatment of offenders, the language used by the apostle does not by any means warrant the exercise of authority against them. Yea, it is rather inculcated that they keep out of their way. The idea of a process of libel and excommunication by the authoritative deed of a church court is not taught, but rather discountenanced. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself lest thou also be tempted." (Gal. vi. 1.) "If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed: yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." (2 Thess. iii. 14, 15.) In these passages is pointed out the manner in which offending brethren are to be treated. A brother overtaken in a fault—one who being tempted has fallen into sin—is to be dealt with kindly and tenderly by the other brethren. Their love to their brother will not by any means diminish their hatred and condemnation of sin—but they will be careful to distinguish between their brother and his sin; and in their reproval of it, they will be careful to avoid wounding unnecessarily the feelings of him in error; for in all cases love to the brethren must be pre-eminent in a believer's heart; and because there is great danger of mixing up human passions with the service and glory of God, a well-regulated mind will carefully abstain from even the appearance of judging or censuring the conduct of another. The reason assigned for thus dealing with offenders is, that every man is subject to temptation;

and they who thus consider their own position, will scarcely venture to deal unkindly with a christian brother overtaken in a fault, when they know not how soon his present case may be their own. A different kind of treatment is prescribed for those who walked disorderly among the Thessalonians. If after the receipt of the apostle's letter they still continued to misconduct themselves, and disregard the friendly admonition of the inspired teacher, then the other brethren were to have no company with them. Did the apostle mean that such were to be forcibly excluded from the communion of the church? that by the act of a church court, or an ecclesiastical superior, they were to be formally suspended from the privileges of the church? Certainly not. Compulsion of any kind, and in any matter, is utterly at variance with the spirit of the christian religion. The apostle is counselling the obedient brethren how to behave themselves towards the unruly; he is laying down a rule by which each man is to regulate his own procedure; he is instructing each faithful member of the church at Thessalonica how to frame his own conduct towards members who walk disorderly. This is a very different thing from granting a power, either of suspension or exclusion of such from the communion of the church. The former is the regulation of a man's own feelings, desires, and conduct; the latter is an interference with the freedom and liberty of others; a freedom and a liberty which it has pleased the Almighty in His manifold wisdom to bestow upon every one of His intelligent offspring, and the control of which He has reserved exclusively to Himself, in the case of all minds, whether righteous or wicked. The apostle's meaning is made more plain by other passages. In his

epistle to the Romans he writes thus: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." (Rom. xvi. 17.) In his second epistle to the Thessalonians, from which the other passage is quoted, the apostle explains his meaning when he says, "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly." (2 Thess. iii. 6.) And to Timothy, who may be called a christian bishop, and to whom certainly such power would have been committed had it any existence at all, and were it consistent with the principles of the christian religion, the apostle Paul writes, saying, "These things teach and exhort, and if any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself." (1 Tim. vi. 2—5.) In these passages we have a description of parties the most disorderly, the most troublesome, and the most unreasonable; and how are they to be treated? For observe, they say they are christians, they are among the brethren, and therefore are they spoken of at all. The counsel of the apostle is well worthy the prayerful and earnest consideration of all churches in the present day, and of every member and minister in the churches. All that the Scriptures authorize you to do when placed in circumstances of contact in the visible church with such parties, is to

"avoid them:" "to withdraw thyself from them." We are not to have company with such. Now it is undeniable that the practice prevalent in all churches is the very opposite. They act upon the principle of thrusting a man out of the church, with whose conduct or teaching they are dissatisfied. Instead of withdrawing from him they expel him from them. The consequences must vary in proportion to the difference in their cause. Even a very bad man may be silenced by kindness and forbearance on the part of those whom he is molesting; but it never has yet been witnessed that any one has been profited by ecclesiastical severities; and even when the power has been exercised in protection of the purity and the doctrines of the church of Christ, the invariable effect has been, that the parties expelled regarding themselves as martyrs, have found an apology to their own conscience for their unruly behaviour in the treatment they have received from Christ's people; and they have never failed to excite considerable sympathy towards them in the minds of onlookers; for by the act of the church they have, in the estimation of such, been transferred from the side of the injurious to the side of the injured; and it is well known that in the case of the vilest criminals in this world, the atrocity of their offence is commonly overlooked by their fellow-men when pitying them under condemnation to punishment for their crime. It is not surprising when this is so in worldly matters, men's own lives and properties having a certain influence in modifying their sympathy for those who have assailed the lives and properties of others, that men, receiving not the things of the Spirit of God, because they are spiritually discerned, should regard the effects of ecclesiastical censures as disproportionate to

the nature of the offence, for to such all matters of this kind seem but a noise of words without meaning; and beyond all question, nothing is more gratifying to worldly and carnal minds than those unseemly strifes and contentions, resulting in the expelling of one party by another. Can it be denied that in this manner the adversary is allowed to prevail, and the name of God blasphemed? The very fact that the sentence of an ecclesiastical court carries with it, to a greater or less extent, civil consequences, such as loss of character, or loss of living, is of itself a strong objection to its being passed; for, is this not an exercise of authority, not unto edification but unto destruction. But the apostle further adds, "Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." Does this not clearly show that believers are not to act towards such in a way calculated to make them enemies? for it would have been unmeaning in the apostle to say, "Count him not as an enemy," if he actually was exhorting the church to treat a man in a way that our experience tells us would make him the inveterate enemy of the church. What is intended becomes still more manifest from the latter clause of the verse, "admonish him as a brother:" from this it is obvious the church is to do nothing by which it will be deprived of availing itself of every opportunity to admonish an erring or unruly professor. Christians must testify against all iniquity, but they may also seek and strive for the salvation of the workers of iniquity. The church was instituted to save; they who exercise authority do what is calculated to destroy. There is a third class of offenders still more difficult to deal with than the two already alluded to. To such the apostle refers in his first epistle to the Corinthians. "It is

commonly reported that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife." Here is a very flagrant case. The sin of this person is revolting. It is not a brother overtaken in a fault; it is a man living in a state of deliberate transgression, and that of a description which avowed infidels would blush to commit. In order to understand this case fully, we must consider carefully the effect which the man's conduct produced upon the Corinthian church. Let us bear in mind the extraordinary character of the man's offence. It was a state of life, not one act of sin, but a living in the constant commission of fearful iniquity. It was not done in secret, rendering necessary the arraigning of the culprit, and his trial by hearing of evidence; his manner of life was known to all who knew himself. It was known unto the church; it was known unto the world. It is a case probably without a parallel in the history of a believing people. It is a case which was permitted, just like that of Ananias and Sapphira, as an illustration of God's purpose in the New Testament economy. In that of Ananias and Sapphira, God has taught the strictness of the rule by which He Himself, and no other, can and will judge the conduct of all professors. In the case before us, He teaches the only limit to human forbearance with transgressors. Just as if He had said, not until a man has become so habitually wicked as to bring a scandal upon my religion, of a kind which infidels would blush to name—not until my people begin to look upon such a man as a ground of glorying in themselves because of their great comparative purity—not until it would be actually perilous to the body of the faithful, and until the act can be viewed by all eye-witnesses as

one of salvation and not of destruction, is any thing like compulsion to be made use of in dealing with offenders. To the Corinthians the apostle said, "And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you." Two things are very evidently proved by this verse: the Corinthians had never previously been taught that they had any power which they could exercise upon offenders. It would rather seem that their teaching had been of the very opposite description, which probably was the occasion of their running to as dangerous an extreme—that of self-gratulation, arising from their personal indifference and unconcern about the sins of another. Is it possible that the state of mind described by the words, "ye are puffed up," could have originated and co-existed with the knowledge of a power to expel and cast out offenders? Is it not clear that if such a power had been deputed either to the bishop, or elders, or deacons, or to the church at large, that the man's conduct would have been taken cognizance of long before? And at all events would the apostle not have reproached them for betrayal of a sacred trust, if it had been committed to them? And again, the apostle says that he might be taken away from among you; not put away by you from among you, but taken away. These words point to a power in the church, but not of the church. They imply an authority of exclusion, but not by the church. They teach that there is a watchful superintendence, the vigilance of which has no parallel among men; but at the same time, that unless it be acknowledged and beseeched, it will be withheld. To this the apostle refers in another passage when he says, "I would they were even cut off which trouble you." (Gal. v. 12.) Is this not a confession that

the apostle had no power in the case referred to, else he would have commanded their expulsion? What he means, and to whom he appeals, and the manner of deliverance from wicked men, he explains in another passage when he says, "Brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you; and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for all men have not faith." (2 Thess. iii. 1, 2.) The first passage refers to teachers in the church—the last has probably a more special reference to parties who make no profession at all; while it may also, and I think it does, include unreasonable and wicked professors, because of the concluding sentence, "all men have not faith;" the use of the words being only intelligible when the apostle is understood to be speaking of persons who profess to have faith. The great truth, however, is taught, that the Lord must be alone regarded as the purifier and refiner of His own body the church; and that when He is recognized by His people as such, and His invisible but all-prevalent power besought, then in His providence, and in a manner in strict harmony with the merciful purpose of the gospel dispensation, He will, in answer to His people's prayers, rid the church of those plague-spots which, when man attempts to do, he very often does in the bitterness of human wrath; and we know "the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." The position of the Corinthian church was one of peculiar peril, and it was occasioned by their non-recognition of the Saviour as walking in the midst of the golden candlesticks; and the inference is legitimate, that if they had besought the Lord in regard to this man, because of their alarm at his sin, Jesus would have interposed in His providence, and with-

out their instrumentality would have taken away either the man from among them, or the cause of offence from himself. It was their neglect in this matter that placed them in the solemn circumstances mentioned by the apostle. That it was a very painful matter is beyond all doubt, for the apostle thus refers to it in his next epistle. "For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you." (2 Cor. ii. 4.) And the reason of this was, that the Corinthian church had not only neglected to testify before the world against the sin of the state in which this man was living; they had not only neglected their duty of praying unto the Lord, either that the man himself might be made conscious of his great wickedness, or removed from among them; they had not only neglected the duty of remonstrating with him and warning him of his danger; but they were actually glorying in the man's sin—a state of mind which very satisfactorily explains all that follows. "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." The very first sentence corroborates the fact, that the Lord Jesus must be recognized in His church as its purifier; and further, it conveys a strong reproof to the Corinthians, who had dishonoured Him in this respect. Who are the parties the apostle commissions in this matter? Does this passage, mysterious though it be, favour the practice of the pope and his priesthood? Does it countenance the vesting of authority, to admit or exclude from the communion of

the church, in the hands of bishops or clergymen in the protestant episcopal church? Does it warrant the assumption of that power on the part of kirk sessions, presbyteries, synods, or assemblies of the presbyterian church? Does it place that power in the hands of a conference, or other deputed ecclesiastical tribunal of the Wesleyan church? Certainly not. Who received this commission? The members of the church at Corinth when gathered together, the apostle being present in spirit with them, though absent in body; that is, sanctioning and approving what they were about to do. Does this passage then authorize a congregational church to exercise authority? Yes! when they are in such painful and distressing circumstances as the church at Corinth was, and when they have present with them, either in body or spirit, an inspired and infallible guide to direct their conduct, it will be, not their privilege, alas! not to their honour, but to their shame, that they meet together to put away from among themselves one, who would not have been tolerated by the Lord to have remained among them, if they had not so grossly violated His law, and dishonoured His name. But where was the power vested? not in the assembled church, for the apostle Paul says, "with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ." They were to invoke Him to whom has been given all power in heaven and in earth. Him who has been made head over all things to His body the church—Him without whom even the potentates of this earth cannot exercise authority, for they have no power except it be given them from above. Now we know that the Lord has given to the civil magistrate the civil sword, and He has authorized its use for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do

well. With this exception, there is no deputed power to any man on earth; and the very fact that it is said by Christ, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth," proves two things; it proves that Jesus is the Universal King, whose dominion ruleth over all; and it further proves, that except by delegation from Him, there can be no lawful exercise of authority. The church is too precious in the Redeemer's sight to be intrusted to any but Himself. It is entirely a spiritual house, and being so, needs not the intervention of carnal power in its government. It is a community, within the spirit of every member of which, the Saviour by His own Spirit dwells. It is a kingdom which cometh not with observation. It is a kingdom not of this world. It is a kingdom not established and governed by might or by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord. So that the only weapons christians can use in this world, or against an erring brother, are prayer to God for the outpouring of His Spirit, and the preaching of the word. Any thing beyond this has no foundation in Scripture. When so met in the name of the Lord, and invoking the power of Christ, what were they to do? "To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." How unlike what men have been accustomed to do in the christian church. The thunders of the vatican pretend to consign their unfortunate victim to the pains of endless wo. The terms in which the unpretending session of a Scotch kirk even in these days pronounces its sentence against a supposed offender, are sufficiently arrogant. "He is suspended from the privileges of the church, aye, and until he can satisfactorily explain his conduct, or give signs

of penitence for the part he has acted in the affair." And what is this but virtually consigning a man to the uncovenanted mercies of God, if I may, without sin, use such an expression? Either the kirk-session sits as God in the throne of God, dispensing mercy and denouncing wrath, or the whole system of church discipline, as it is called, is an idle and unmeaning ceremony. Church discipline! this is not man's province. Christ alone, the searcher of hearts, and the trier of the reins of the children of men, can exercise just and wholesome discipline; and I say, without fear of contradiction, this power, presumptuous even in the most limited form it can be exercised, has been more frequently made use of as a cloak to cover human malice and personal animosity, than as a means of glorifying the Redeemer, in the endeavour to purify His church. Wherever the true spirit of Christ is, the error of the Corinthians will be avoided; so also will the meekness, and the gentleness, and the tenderness of that spirit guide those to whom is committed the oversight of the church to a more excellent way of dealing, not with supposed offenders, against whom it requires something more than ordinary diligence to discover materials upon which to ground matter of accusation, but with offenders, whose guilt is known in the church, and unto thew orld. It is most remarkable, that man is excluded from any part in this painful transaction, beyond what is humiliating and full of rebuke. Why were the Corinthians made instrumental, even to the extent of formally putting away from among themselves the wicked person? Not because it was an honour to them; not because it was the unpleasant duty of christians to do this on all occasions. What kind christian heart but would almost break if compelled to be the

instrument of formally consigning another fellow-being, even while in a state of probation, to great suffering? Ye who will lord it over God's heritage, do not say yours is a duty inseparable from the holding of office in the christian church. Who would be a common executioner in this world? But what is that, compared with the office of a man who pretends that he is the instrument, in any one case, of consigning to eternal wo a human being? Who would be the inflictor upon another man of corporeal suffering, merited for crime? But what is that, compared with the untold anguish to which one pretends to consign another when he suspends him, even temporarily, from the privileges of the church? Hear it, ye kind-hearted and tender christians. Hear it, ye whose souls yearn for happiness to all, and misery to none. Hear it, ye who having the mind that was in Christ, weep over the sins of an obstinate and wicked people, and even when persecuted, reviled, and it may be tortured, dream not of repelling force by force; think not of a power wherewith to denounce the adversary, but out of the fulness of a gracious heart say, when suffering at the hands of men, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Hear it, ye who desire to have nothing to do but preach the gospel; unto salvation the Lord has in mercy provided a way of escape for Himself and you. He cannot be the scourge of His own people, and He does not ask you to become that scourge. He does not even accuse His own people, and He does not ask you to become their accusers. There is one whose delight it is to accuse the brethren—there is one who is ever ready to afflict, and, when permitted, to destroy Christ's people. He is made the instrument of suffering in the flesh, and his children, the children of the wicked one, are the

human instruments that scourge the saints of God. The man of the Corinthian church was delivered unto Satan; and the church at Corinth was employed in this matter in the way described, because they themselves needed the scourge of the adversary to cleanse them from their participation in the sin of an erring brother, and that above all they might be an example to every christian church in the ages to come, to show forth the true and only duty of a christian congregation in regard to the sins of their members. They who assume the power of admitting or excluding from ordinances, forming their judgment after the flesh, because none but the Omniscient can judge after the spirit, (and who in these days does not to some extent ratify this pernicious principle?) must be told that it is a serious error, persistance in which may endanger the removal of their candlestick out of its place. It is the sin of wicked men that they are human instruments in purifying Christ's church. How then can it be consistent with a christian profession to participate in that, for which the wrath of God shall be revealed from heaven against the wicked: "seeing it is a righteous thing with God, to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you." (2 Thess. i. 6.)

We now come to the consideration of a very solemn and instructive view of this great question. For what purpose was the member of the Corinthian church to be delivered unto Satan? It was "for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." How distinct and clear the truth is manifested! The spirit of a man is not under the control even of Satan, when that man is delivered to him for the very purpose of purifying him. God alone is the occupant of the throne of man's

spirit, and this is that glory which He will not give to another. Further, how clearly are we taught the impiety of that man who arrogates any kind of control in regard to the things of a man's spirit, whether they relate to time or eternity. This is the turning point between the true and the false religion. The false religion consists in the subjection of a man's spirit to a man, in matters of faith and practice. The very essence of all idolatry is the substitution of a creature for the Creator. The true religion teaches a man to be subject to God, and to God alone, in every matter, from the least unto the greatest, that concerns the destiny of his immortal soul. Upon no account, and under no circumstances, can a man be subject to man in spiritual matters, without dishonouring his God. Be counselled, all ye who violate this law, not wilfully, but in ignorance; be warned, all men, whether bishops, or priests, or ministers, or elders, or deacons, or members; consider with whom ye have to do—a jealous God—a consuming fire. This is the sin, the great iniquity of His professing people. God will come, and will not tarry. "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? The Lord's voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it." (Micah vi. 8, 9.) "Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel." (Amos iv. 12.)

This great practical truth was illustrated in the life of our Lord Himself. "Early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down and taught them. And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery: and when they had set her in the midst, they

say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act." (John viii. 2—4.) This is nearly a parallel case to the man at Corinth. The offence is flagrant and notorious. It is not necessary to commence a process and lead witnesses. She was taken in the very act. "Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned; but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him." (John viii. 5, 6.) The Mosaic dispensation is here introduced. The design of our Lord's enemies was to entrap him in his reply; but His purpose was to overrule their wickedness, and make the occasion instrumental in teaching important truth. "But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground." This was a most significant act, for by it the Saviour indicated His assent to the truth, that by the finger of God, or according to the Divine appointment, Moses wrote that law; but it was the writing upon the earth, the shadow of good things to come, the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us; blotting it out, He took it out of the way by nailing it to His cross. This act intimated the abolition of the law quoted, for its main design was to teach the Israelites that in God's sight all sin was worthy of death, and thus prepare men's minds for the reception of the gospel, which declares remission of sin through Christ's death, as an atonement for sin. "So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin, let him first cast a stone at her." (Ver. 7.) The scribes and pharisees did not understand the meaning of our Lord's act, for they continued asking Him. What He said unto them, He has said unto all, he that is without sin himself, let him

become the accuser, and the judge of another. Tried by this rule, "they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out, one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst." (Ver. 9.) How similar this in one sense to the scene witnessed during the transfiguration upon the mount. Moses was in both places. In both instances the evanescent nature of his dispensation, as contrasted with the heavenly, was illustrated. In both instances Christ is left alone; on the mount the voice was heard declaring, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye him." In the temple the truth is taught, that from thence Jesus is the only Master to whom men are to be subject; and the sinner even taken in the very act of transgression must be left with Jesus alone. This is a merciful and gracious arrangement. Jesus is an High Priest who can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, for He was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Human judges can only judge after the flesh. An offending Noah though justified; faithful Abraham when through fear he denied his wife; David the man according to God's own heart, when he transgressed in the matter of Uriah; Peter the apostle when he denied his Lord; all these, if judged by man's judgment, would have been condemned, and cast out of the church. Thanks be to God, He is the Judge, and a Judge who judgeth righteous judgment, who seeth no iniquity in Jacob, neither perverseness in Israel. Be comforted ye mourners in Zion. When ye come to Jesus alone, He will ask, as in the case of this woman, "Where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?" And when ye reply, "No man, Lord;" thus acknowledging Him as your Saviour, and confessing

Him to be both Lord and Christ, a Prince and a Saviour, exalted to give repentance unto Israel, and the remission of sins; then will Jesus say unto thee, "Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more." (John viii. 11.) "Who then shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.) Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. viii. 33—39.) Therefore let all men learn, that they can neither alter nor amend the purpose of Jehovah; and let all consider, that he who pretends to a power of admission or exclusion from the privileges of Christ's house, is intruding into that of which he is altogether ignorant, and in deciding upon which he is certain to err, because he knoweth not the hearts of any, and without such knowledge, the power referred to cannot be exercised in any sense; and happy will it be for them, who, from henceforth openly disclaim all pretension to the possession of what is a prerogative of Deity, and the arrogating of which is actual impiety. "Render unto God, the things which are God's."

Ver. 10. "Fear none of those things which thou shalt

suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried: and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

The Lord forewarns the church in Smyrna to prepare for further trials. "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer." Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial that it is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you. Fear not, neither be dismayed, I will not leave thee nor forsake thee. "Behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison that ye may be tried." Satan hath desired thee that he might sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith fail not. "And ye shall have tribulation ten days." In this world ye shall have tribulation, but I have limited the time of its duration; be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life." Be ye steadfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; continue in this spirit, and abound in these labours, though it should be at the peril of your life, and occasion your death. Hold fast your confidence while you live, even until you die, forasmuch as you know your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

These things were written unto the church in Smyrna; they were written for our instruction; they have a real and special application to those who live in the present day, to those upon whom the ends of the world have come. There are few congregations, if any, that are not in the circumstances that the church in Smyrna then was. In every church there are those who say they are Jews and are not; those who profess to serve and worship the true God but do not. It will not be asserted

by any section of the visible church that all who call themselves christians in connection with it, are really and truly Christ's people. There is not even one congregation of the faithful, of which any man will say they are all christians, and to whom the first and the last is not now saying, "I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews: that is, worshippers of the true God, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan;" that is, the children of the wicked one. If this be admitted, and who can deny it? then according to the commonly received opinion that ecclesiastical superiors are responsible for the purity of the church, they must be liable to censure in proportion to the number within the church who are not of the church. The power of admitting to or excluding from the privileges of Christ's house, must have a responsibility attached to the manner of its exercise. If persons be admitted who are not christians, then there is guilt incurred. If one christian be rejected or excluded, this abuse of such a power is still more heinous in its guilt. I know that the motives which actuate many sincerely good men in their conduct in this matter are above all suspicion. I bear witness to their zeal for the purity of the Master's house, and to their love both to Christ and the brethren. Yea, I have no hesitation in saying, that while I am confident the excellent of the earth have been not unfrequently the victims of this spiritual power, I am just as confident that the excellent of the earth have been also not unfrequently the administrators of it against such. I do not say that the sinful occasion of such painful occurrences was either with the one party or with the other. They are the necessary results of a wrong principle introduced into the church by the enemy of God and man; and perhaps the most effective argu-

ment against its Divine origin is the fact, that God's own people have been in all ages its peculiar victims. I would just ask any sincere christian, would you willingly incur the guilt of treating with unkindness, and excluding from the communion of the visible church, one of God's children? Consider that there is a possibility, nay, a probability—perhaps God may so permit that it may be a certainty in your case—that if you again attempt to exercise such a power it will be upon one dear to Christ and beloved by the Father; and this may happen for the merciful purpose of showing, not your own personal hatred of God and God's, but God's hatred and condemnation of that principle which regulates your conduct in such cases. Do you not see the fallacy of your own position? Are you a bishop or pastor, an elder or deacon? Have you discharged the duty which you thought incumbent upon you of admitting or excluding parties from the church under your care? Then, are all its members pure? Have you admitted none whom you have afterwards felt called upon to cast out, because you thought them unworthy? Have you cast out none who may possibly be as certain of salvation as yourselves? At the present moment, can you look abroad upon all those placed under your care in the church, and say in God's sight, Lord, here I am, and those thou hast given me? It will not do to shrink back and say, I never claimed any such power as that described. It will not do to say, that all I claimed as a ruler in the church was to be allowed to judge according to the outward man, after the flesh. It will not do to say, I never presumed to think that I could distinguish a believer from an unbeliever, except by his external conduct. The fact is indisputable, spiritual

power, ecclesiastical authority, cannot be vested in any man. It is of such a nature that none but the Omniscient can exercise it without erring. Will it then be pretended that the Lord has committed to the stewards of His house a power, and attached to its exercise a responsibility, while He has denied them the ability wherewith to use it, on all occasions, for edification and not for destruction? The best refutation of this practical error, so prevalent in the church, is the fact that it is beyond the limits of man's ability to do what so many have been for so long a time attempting to do; and the presumption of that man, or that body of men, who would venture to say that through their exercise of what is called church discipline they have purged Christ's church according to His mind, is very great; and they who look back upon the unhappy scenes they have either occasioned or been parties to, in the exercise of this discipline upon the ministers or members of the church, and who justify the unholy strife and angry feeling of which it has been the cause, by pleading a zeal for the purity of the church, have yet much to learn, ere they truly know either the spirit or the practice which becometh the house of God. It is pleasing to reflect upon what the Lord says of Himself: "my ways are not your ways, neither are your thoughts my thoughts." Were it not so, what would become of us? If Jehovah were to deal with us as we have dealt with each other, what would be our state? The Lord is now coming. The sign of that coming our eyes may now behold. Prophets and righteous men have desired to see those days which we see, and saw them not. The Lord is at hand, and He has sent to prepare us for His glorious appearing. Unto all churches and congregations

He says, "I know the blasphemy of them which say they are christians and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan." To all He says, you have assumed to yourselves a power I never gave you, an authority you are unable to exercise. I might demand from thee an account of thy stewardship in this matter, but I pass it by. Learn, however, in time to come, that "the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind." (Matt. xiii. 47.) That is, the labourers in God's house, the preachers of the word, the fishers of men, have just as much power to admit to or exclude from the gospel net their fellow-men, as fishers who cast a net into the sea have power to admit to or exclude from their net any kind of fish. When the net is full it is brought to the shore; then the good are gathered into vessels, and the bad are cast away. So is it with the gospel church in this world: good and bad men shall be together in it until the end; and then not men, not preachers, not church courts, not ecclesiastical superiors, not spiritual rulers, but the angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from the just. "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath. But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the men-servants and maidens, and to eat and drink and to be drunken; the lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbeliev-

ers." (Luke xii. 42—46.) The faithful steward is he who feeds the flock, gives them their portion of meat in due season. He that lords it over God's heritage, and beats the men-servants and maidens, calling himself a spiritual ruler, is in a perilous case; nevertheless, "he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes." (Luke xiii. 48.) To every church Christ says, "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer." "For behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." (Mal. iv. 1.) "He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner: but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." (Luke iii. 16, 17.) These passages illustrate the meaning of our Saviour's words, written unto the church in Smyrna originally, but now addressed to all the churches in these last days. Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. "Behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison that ye may be tried." But for the restraining power of God, this earth would be filled with violence. The darkest places of our globe, which are the habitations of horrid cruelty, are specimens of what the whole human family would be if Satan had his will. It is a glorious view of Jehovah's character, that in which He represents Himself as love itself. "How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God." (Psalm xxxvi. 7.) "The Lord is gracious, and

full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. The Lord is good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works." (Ps. cxlv. 7.) Our Father in heaven "maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." (Mat. v. 45.) It is a great error to suppose that God inflicts pain or suffering upon any creature, except in the sense of permitting Satan and wicked men to scourge His own children for their profit, even their sanctification, and afterwards to be the instruments of punishing each other because of their great wickedness. The Bible is written in a style suited to the limited capacity of human minds, and does no doubt convey the idea that God Himself chastises His own, and punishes the wicked. This is truth; but it is only true in the sense of God's permitting so much of the wickedness of angels and men to work, as will accomplish these two important and necessary objects. In every act of God in Christ, mercy and love prevail; and it is in Christ He created and governs the world. When it is said, "He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver," the meaning is, that God permits the devil, who goeth about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, to cast his people into a prison of sorrow and affliction, that they may be tried. He restrains the wrath of man; He keeps it within limits which it cannot overpass; "He causes the remainder of wrath to praise Him;" what He permits is glorifying to Himself, beneficial to His church, and a just recompense to the wicked. This is a view of God's character well worthy of prayerful and constant meditation. Jehovah is presented to our minds as a God all goodness and love. A Being so incomprehensibly good, that instead of adding, so to speak, to the misery which

sinners occasion to themselves, He actually diminishes its amount, restrains their fury in the present state, permits not the evil to be done that Satan and sinners would do if allowed; and oh, wondrous wisdom! surpassing goodness! what He does permit is only for good to them that love Him, while its effect is just upon them that hate Him. How gloriously this is manifested in the cross of Christ: such is that love of God that passeth all knowledge—such is the inconceivable benevolence—such the excellent loving kindness of our God, that to open a door through which it might flow out unto a fallen race, He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all; and such the equity of His character, the wicked, in time and throughout eternity, can only be filling up the measure of that cup of sorrow which the Lord of glory and His people have drunk at their hands while in this life. The cup of God's wrath is full when He ceases to restrain the fierce and cruel passions of devils and wicked men; and the time of trouble upon which we have now entered, in which the fire of the Lord is to burn, will furnish solemn testimony, that, left to themselves and the instigation of Satan, wicked men have hearts deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; all men shall see the glory of the Lord in the fearful calamities which Satan and wicked men shall now occasion in this world. It would seem as if the horrors and disasters of untold wickedness were to be permitted now to devastate a great portion of our earth and large numbers of the human family, as a contrast to that reign of righteousness and universal peace which they are to usher in and prepare the way for. "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the

earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled." (Luke xxi. 25—28, 32.) Therefore, "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer; behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days"—that is, ten years. Thus it is that the Redeemer will purify His church. Thus it is He will separate the wheat from the chaff. Thus it is He will be a consuming fire destroying all His adversaries, and a refiner's fire purifying His people. Thus it is that at the appointed time He will come and will not tarry. Thus it is that during the years fixed, the fire will burn and will not be quenched; and hence it is, He says to all, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." "Be thou faithful;" "it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful." (1 Cor. iv. 2.) All churches and all christians have important duties to discharge in this world, and to this world. They have also solemn responsibilities within the church. While there is no authority of a nature to subject one mind to the dominion of another, neither power held and exercised by few over many, still there is rule, there is order, there is government in Christ's house, for God is a God of order, and not of confusion. In this matter the apostolic injunction is, "Be ye therefore followers of God as

dear children." (Eph. v. 1.) Now we have seen that God governs the world in Christ, and that government is a government like God Himself, and we know that God is love; so then His government is a government of love, therefore the apostle adds, "walk in love." (Eph. v. 2.) The apostle elsewhere says, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." (1 Cor. xi. 1.) And again, "Ye became followers of us, (Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus,) and of the Lord." (1 Thess. i. 6.) The apostle's introduction of himself in the first passage, and along with himself other two evangelists in the second passage, and in both cases mentioning the Lord, is designed to teach important truth. It would seem that the example of both our Lord and His inspired servant is needful for the instruction and guidance of the church; and in the last passage it is intimated that we are to follow the apostle, and then follow the example of the Lord. The Redeemer came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. The apostle and all christians need to be ministered unto, before they can minister unto others. Christ was without spot and blameless. The apostle and all christians have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. Jesus had to strive against sin from without, and had to endure the contradiction of sinners against Himself. The apostle and all christians have to strive against sin within themselves, laying aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset; and they have also to contend with the evil in the world. The reason for the apostolic injunction itself, as well as the design of placing the human example before the divine in the passage, is not because the example of an apostle, or his successors in the church, was to be held as of equal authority with the holy and unblemished life of the

Lord; but because in one essential respect it was impossible for believers to find an illustration of their feelings and infirmities in the person of the man Christ Jesus; therefore was the apostle Paul in particular set forth as an example of suffering for well-doing; and these are the words in which this great truth is communicated to Ananias, when at the time of Paul's conversion the Lord appeared unto him in a vision, saying, "I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." (Acts ix. 16.) It is obvious that in every thing christians are to imitate Christ alone, and as sinners contending with sin, they are to imitate the apostle. So that Paul's being introduced is not a mark of honour, in so far as the cause is concerned, that being his having a sinful and corrupt nature, his being a child of wrath by nature even as others. Our Lord testifies at the beginning of Paul's career—the apostle himself testifies at its close—and that in words which convey the very idea which the words of our Lord now under consideration also convey—"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." (1 Tim. iv. 6—8.) We may therefore expect to find in the teaching and conduct and experience of the apostle Paul, an example worthy of our imitation, in our endeavour to yield obedience unto the Lord, when He says to each of us, "be ye faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." It is written in the Proverbs of Solomon, "He that hath no rule over his own spirit, is like a city that

is broken down, and without walls." (Prov. xxv. 28.) And again, "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty: and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." (Prov. xvi. 32.) The lesson in these words is for all, but specially for those who occupy a false position in the city which is from above, even the new Jerusalem. "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things." (Rom. ii. 1.) There is a rule in God's house; there is a government in the church, yea, a very strict government, needing great diligence to carry it on—a rule and a government of divine origin, under divine superintendence, and of divine execution. It begins in the heart of every chosen vessel from the moment he believes, continues throughout all his life, and only terminates with his death; and thus is explained what our Saviour means, "be thou faithful unto death." No other kind of government or rule in the church can compensate for the want of this; and wherever it exists, it supersedes the necessity of any other. Preach, exhort, admonish, persuade all men as the apostle did, saying, he that ruleth let him rule with diligence; but take care ye ask not—ye teach not man to subject his spirit to man, in which case he may die; but rather say, "shall we not be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?" (Heb. xii. 9.) "Wherefore, let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator." (1 Peter iv. 19.) What it is each christian has to rule within himself, is fully illustrated by the apostle Paul; so is also the nature, the manner, and the weapons of this great warfare. "I have fought

a good fight," the apostle says; elsewhere he writes, saying, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places:" This is the nature of the warfare; its manner is thus described, "I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." (Rom. vii. 21—23.) The severity of this conflict, the mental anguish and bodily suffering with which it is invariably accompanied, are most touchingly illustrated in the following words of the inspired but suffering apostle, "O wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" The only power which the apostle acknowledges as sufficient to bring under subjection his sinful nature, is that of the Lord Jesus; and it will scarcely be pretended that a different mode and kind of treatment can be of avail in any other case; every believer now must, like Paul, be left with Jesus alone; and his cry of exultation must resemble Paul's, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. vii. 24, 25.) The weapons or the means by which a spirit is brought under subjection, are all divinely appointed; and in their use, each believer is responsible for himself alone, and not for any other. "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having

your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: praying with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." (Eph. vi. 13—18.) The warfare is a spiritual one; it exists within the person of every believer; and each for himself, and not one for others, must take and put on the whole armour of God. The sword is given to the civil magistrate with which he is to rule over others; but in the church, the house of God, every man must take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, and rule himself. The only allowable interference with the state of another man is that of prayer to God always, with all prayer and supplication in the spirit; and it is thus that the overseers of God's people watch with all perseverance and supplication for the souls of the saints, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; and where such stewards are, the people who will not obey and submit themselves unto their kind, affectionate, and godly counsel, when admonished to fight the good fight of faith, when exhorted to be sober and vigilant, when entreated to be fruitful unto every good word and work, when, in short, a people will not suffer the word of exhortation, then they are presumptuous and self-willed; but when a man, in virtue of his ministerial office, claims a right to rule over men's spirits; when, in the exercise of spiritual authority, he demands subjection to himself, because of his office, then he is

presumptuous and self-willed, and the people who submit to such things know not the liberty wherewith Christ hath made His people free. The distinction is a very broad one. The apostle writes unto Titus, "These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee." (Titus ii. 15.) This is the duty of a christian minister, an office-bearer in the church of Christ, and no one can deny it is a high, holy, and solemn office; but it has been sadly misunderstood; for the rule, unhappily much prevalent, is rather, "these persons speak to, and exhort, and rebuke with all thy authority. Let no man despise these things." The Scriptures place all authority in the word spoken; the practice of many places all authority in the man who speaks it. The Scriptures authorize ministers to rebuke ungodliness and worldly lusts, and exhort to lives of sobriety, righteousness, and godliness; the practice of many is to rebuke and exhort the men themselves, and not their deeds; that is, they rebuke the person, and not his sin, and they thus become his judges; they command the man, and require his obedience, because they have spoken, instead of presenting the truth, and persuading to its belief and practice. God's plan makes man accountable to Himself alone—men's tradition makes him accountable to man; and because it does so, either destroys or weakens the sense of his accountability to God. The divine plan commends as noble they who receive the word with all readiness of mind, and search the Scriptures daily, whether the things they hear are so, and who therefore believe. Human tradition demands what God does not—it requires implicit faith in the teaching of the church, without any investigation, because it is the teaching of the church. The last sentence of

the passage, "let no man despise thee," removes all doubt: if Titus as a bishop had received authority such as has been for a long period practised in the church, this injunction of the apostle would be most unintelligible. Does it not appear that the authority spoken of in the same verse must have been in "these things?" in the word, and not in the man? Would the apostle not have said, let no man despise thy authority, if Titus had any authority at all; instead of which he says, let no man despise thee personally, clearly proving the equality of all in the church of Christ, whether they be bishops, pastors, or people.

But this is not all: there is rule in the house of God, in its associated capacity. There are overseers, and "this is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." (1 Tim. iii. 1.) We have already seen that every man must rule his own spirit, so "a bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous." (1 Tim. iii. 2, 3.) All christians must be the same; so that the meaning is, the bishop is to be an example of godliness in his own person unto the flock. He must be "one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?" (1 Tim. iii. 4, 5.) This explains the kind of rule which is established in the church. A man who rules his own house well, displays a fitness to take care of the church of God; and how does the Scriptures teach a man to rule in his own house? Hear what is written: "Husbands, love your

wives even as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it." (Eph. v. 25.) "Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." (Eph. vi. 4.) No wise man, and certainly no christian man, would attempt to rule in his own house as some men have done in the church of God. The idea of a rule of mere authority is at variance with that kindness and affection which are the bond of perfectness in every house where true happiness dwells. A good man loves his wife more, if that be possible, than he loves himself; and when the apostle counsels the wife to obey, can it be for a moment questioned that his only meaning is, that she is to strive to bring her feelings and her desires as much as possible into harmony with those of her husband. The idea of a husband commanding with authority, and the wife obeying under fear of a penalty, is, thanks be to God, nowhere taught in Scripture. How could it be so, when the relationship between a husband and his wife is figurative of the relationship existing between Christ and his church? They who know how to rule well their own houses, know that love, forbearance, meekness, and tenderness to all within them, are the best preservers of order, regularity, and happiness; and they also know that the constant exercise of these give them a power and control in their household more potent than any other kind of authority; and they farther know, that the rule of mere power, which is a rule of terror, a rule of tyranny, cannot in the most modified form co-exist with the rule of love; for the one must and will destroy the other. Love casteth out all fear. Where there is dread of power there cannot be love. In God's house there is but one master, all the rest are brethren. A bishop, therefore, while a master

in his own house, is only a steward in the house of God. "God hath set some in the church, first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that miracles; then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." (1 Cor. xii. 28.) These are the various duties of the various members of Christ's body. All have not the same office, but all have some office. There cannot be a doubt, but that every member of Christ's church has some work to do for the good of the whole body; and whatever it is, it will be found among one or other of the offices enumerated in this passage. Among these we find governments. It might be shown that these probably are exclusively self-governments; but I seek not so to limit the interpretation of the word. I have no objection to allow others to interpret it, as meaning exclusively what are called ecclesiastical governments; and all I ask is, that they who so limit the interpretation give earnest heed to what the apostle enjoins concerning these governments. He repeats the different offices again by way of interrogation. "Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? but covet earnestly the best gifts." (1 Cor. xii. 29—31.) Now it is very remarkable that in this second enumeration governments are omitted. Is this designed or not? Is it for a purpose or not? Is it because of their minor importance in the church or not? It must be designed, and for a purpose that they are omitted; and it cannot be because of their inferiority in importance, for as I have already said, to my mind, the word may with considerable propriety be exclusively applied to the self-governments of which we have been speaking, and if there be

any other government at all in the church, it will no doubt be included. But I am not disposed to press this view, except for the purpose of giving equal, if not superior, importance to governments than is given to any other of the offices named; this done, I return to the view that ecclesiastical authority is here exclusively meant; and what is the great lesson which is taught to every man? What saith the apostle as to governments? "Yet show I unto you a more excellent way. Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge: and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." (1 Cor. xii. 31, xiii. 1—3.) How powerful the teaching of this part of Scripture. The government of Christ's house is a government of charity, that is love. All other gifts and graces when contrasted with it are as nothing, and without it they are valueless. I would to God that every office-bearer in the church of Christ had eyes to see, ears to hear, and a heart to understand these things. If you will rule, then be ye followers of God as dear children; let your rule be a rule of love, and not of power. Do cease from that assumption and assertion of a power to govern in a way which Jehovah the great ruler of all disowns; and learn to cherish that love and humility which will make you truly great, and give you a moral power and influence worthy of being possessed, and which will be all the more potent in its exercise for good to others, the less you know of its existence your-

selves. The apostle asks, are all apostles? are all prophets? &c. Why does he not ask, are all rulers or governors? In each of the other cases the reply is in the negative—all are not either one or other of these things; and what can the apostle mean to teach, but that all are rulers, and that love is to be the constraining power with which each is to govern his own heart; and in his treatment of others, the golden rule is to be followed, he is to love his neighbour as himself. "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." (1 Cor. xiii. 4—7.)

I have now brought this important subject to a conclusion. Truly the Lord's exhortation is a comprehensive but a needful one, "be thou faithful unto death." Let us remember it is much easier to make a show of zeal for Christ's glory in contending with other men, than to show it in fighting the good fight in our own hearts. It is one thing to contend with a civil government for the headship of Christ as master in His own house, but it is a very different and a much more difficult thing to contend for Christ's headship in our own hearts. Let the church of Christ place itself in the position which Christ wills it to occupy in the world. Let all His people govern each himself, and not the one trampling upon the heavenly birthright and spiritual independence of the other. Let the church cease, as a church, to have any connection with the things of the world; and let its office-bearers cease to exercise any

kind of authority, except that of love, over God's household. Then will human governments and earthly powers be without the shadow of a pretext for interference with the house of God. When this separation from all worldly and secular influences takes place, then shall be said of the church of the Redeemer, "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved? Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?" (Song of Sol. viii. 5, 6, 10.) When the equality of all God's people in God's house is acknowledged—when he that is chief becomes servant of all—when the mind that was in Christ is found in His people—when they love each other as Christ hath loved them—when all authority and rule is put down in Christ's house—when Satan is cast out of the church, then shall the Son of Man sit on the throne of His glory. Then shall God's people be one in Christ; and then shall the world believe that the Father hath sent the Son. Hear the words of the Psalmist and of the prophecy of Isaiah, which are now to be fulfilled: "This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob. Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be lift up ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is the King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory." (Psal. xxiv. 6—10.) "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from

the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion. For thus saith the Lord, Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money. For thus saith the Lord God, My people went down aforetime into Egypt to sojourn there; and the Assyrian oppressed them without cause. Now therefore, what have I here, saith the Lord, that my people is taken away for nought? They that rule over them make them to howl, saith the Lord; and my name continually every day is blasphemed. Therefore my people shall know my name: therefore they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak; behold, it is I. How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion. Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God. Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord. For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the Lord will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rere-ward." (Isa. lii. 1—12.) "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Ver. 11. "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."

He that overcometh is he that endureth unto the end. To overcome has a twofold meaning. He that overcomes must suffer in the flesh, and that suffering he must endure with patience in God's sight. He that overcomes must suffer at the hands of others, and while so suffering he must forbear threatening; he must not revile, neither return railing for railing, but contrariwise, blessing. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy: but I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." (Mat. v. 43—45.) It is no easy matter to overcome; it is difficult to show kindness to an erring brother; how much more contrary to human nature to love and do good to those who injure and persecute ourselves. It is the triumph of christian love which our Lord refers to in this passage. Its triumph in a man's heart and life; its triumph over his natural feelings, desires, and passions; its triumph in his conversation and conduct; its triumph in all his behaviour in the church, and towards his brethren; its triumph in all his deportment before the men of the world, and his treatment of them in all circumstances. "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but

overcome evil with good." (Rom. xii. 18—21.) "Shall not be hurt of the second death." "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." (Rev. xx. 14.) "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." (Mat. xxiv. 13.) The second death is no doubt the state of eternal condemnation from which he that overcometh is delivered. But the passage has another interpretation, and which is probably the correct application of our Lord's words. The power of the church is given for edification. It has received a commission from the Redeemer, and its office is to save. The name of the king over the locusts, whose power was to hurt men, is in the Hebrew tongue Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon; in both cases the signification being the Destroyer. Our Lord is forewarning His church that a time of great trouble awaits it. He intimates His knowledge that there are many who say they are christians, and are not. Because of this, and for the purpose of purifying His people themselves, the devil is to be permitted to have power over them, that he may sift them as wheat. His fury will be let loose, and He will go forth to destroy and make away with many. The troublous times are near. The time is now come that judgment must begin at the house of God. "They shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake." (Luke xxi. 12.) When the days of the sufferings of the house of God are completed; when Satan and wicked men have filled up the measure of their iniquity in the last great attempt to destroy God's people; then will their fury be let loose upon each other, and then will be destroyed

them which destroy the earth. The first death or destruction is the fiery trial by which believers are to be purified, and made white, and thus become prepared for the great work of evangelizing all nations. This destruction of the flesh is the work of Satan and wicked men. The second death, or the destruction of the destroyers, is the complete overthrow of Satan's power in this world; the uprooting of every institution, the overturning of every throne, and kingdom, and nation, and power, that opposes itself to the Lord Jesus; and the promise given to true christians is, he that overcometh, he that is faithful unto death, he that patiently endureth suffering unto the end, having that mind in him which was also in Christ, shall through that suffering be instrumental in the destruction of him who has the power over it, and shall not be hurt by any of those calamities and woes, by which the death of the destroyers shall be accomplished. "If it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them who obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator." (1 Peter iv. 17—19.)

CHAPTER XII.

CHAP. ii. ver. 12, 13. "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth."

Unto the Thessalonians the apostle Paul wrote, saying, "The mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth, will let, until he be taken out of the way: and then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming; whose coming is after the working of Satan." (2 Thess. ii. 7—9.) It would appear that Satan had gained a considerable footing in the church at Pergamos. Our Lord says, "I know where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is;" also, "Antipas was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth." The church's dwelling was also Satan's dwelling; the meaning of which is, that many of his children were among the members of the church at Pergamos. It is said to be where Satan's seat is, implying, that evil principles had gained a prevalency within

the church, and that the powers of darkness were contending with the light. To this church our Lord makes Himself known as "he which hath the sharp sword with two edges." To the church beset by Satan and the emissaries of darkness, the Saviour makes Himself known as the Word of God, by the preaching of which alone are all His enemies to be slain. "I know thy works." The presence of the great adversary may hinder sometimes, but it never can destroy, the fruits unto holiness. The christians at Pergamos had Satan dwelling among them, and perhaps if judged by man's judgment, they would have been condemned along with their ungodly fellow-worshippers, and, probably, if even acknowledged, they would be censured for being among them. Our Lord judges righteous judgment, and their trying position is alluded to, evidently for the purpose of enhancing His commendation of them. He knew them whose conversation was as becometh the gospel. He knew that consistency of conduct and godliness of life which His own people in the church at Pergamos maintained, although peculiarly beset by Satan himself. They had experienced days of trial; one of their number had been slain; he is named Antipas, and Christ acknowledges him as His faithful martyr. During these troubles they had held fast His name, and had not denied His faith. This is a very high commendation of the christians in the church at Pergamos. It is one which some of the churches in the present day can lay claim to, for to them Christ is now saying what He said unto the angel of the church in Pergamos; and there is this pleasing and happy difference, the christians of the present day, especially those belonging to the churches in Britain, are members of churches in which

the work of reformation has been steadily progressing for a period of three centuries, being subjected in its course to frequent, and sometimes violent, checks at the instigation of Satan, who yet dwells among us; still, however, progressing, and not to degenerate as the church at Pergamos did, but, thanks be to God, destined soon to be delivered from the presence of the wicked one; for "I saw Satan like lightning fall from heaven," when the "Son of man came like lightning." Thus shall he be cast out of the churches, neither shall his place be found any more in them.

Ver. 14. "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication."

Perfection is not to be found in any church on earth. Churches whose faithfulness to Christ in many things is indisputable, may, nevertheless, be greatly in error in other things. It was so with the church in Pergamos. It is so with the churches of Christ in the present day. Many of them can point to not a few names among them who, in troublous times now past, have sealed their testimony with their blood, and are worthy of being called the faithful martyrs of Jesus. Against them, however, Christ has a few things which they would do well to search out and consider, in order to further amendment and reformation. "Thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam." Our Lord does not say, them who follow the way of Balaam, who do his deeds; but they who hold the doctrine of Balaam. This is a very important distinction. Balaam's sin was the unpardonable sin. When Balak king of Moab sent the elders of

Moab and the elders of Midian to Balaam with the rewards of divination, it was to ask him to come and curse Israel, the chosen people of God. The Lord appeared unto Balaam, and said, "Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed." (Num. xxii. 12.) This injunction was plain and explicit, but Balaam's subsequent conduct proved that his heart was not right in the sight of God. He knew the will of God, and yet he set himself in opposition to it. His was not a sin of infirmity, but a sin of heart, a state of enmity against God. He loved the wages of unrighteousness. He coveted the gifts of Balak; and when obedience to God, and a happy end which Balaam also desired, were put into competition with his love of the wages of unrighteousness, he made choice of the latter. To him, the fulfilment of the declared purpose of God—to him, the happiness of those whom God had blessed, was less precious than the obtaining of the gifts of Balak; and he was prepared to curse those whom God had blessed, even after Jehovah made this known to him. Truly, "It had been better for him not to have known the way of righteousness, than after he had known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto him." (2 Peter ii. 21.) This was the deed, the sin of Balaam, and it was a sin unto death. Our Lord explains what was the doctrine of Balaam, when He says, he "taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel; to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication." When Balaam failed in his repeated attempts to curse Israel, he taught Balak a way of causing their destruction from the presence of the Lord. The people of Israel were on their journey up from Egypt through the wilderness to

the land of promise. Edom had refused his brother Israel a passage through his territory, although the messengers sent by Moses said unto Kadesh the king, "We will not pass through the fields, or through the vineyards, neither will we drink of the water of the wells: we will go by the king's highway, we will not turn to the right hand nor to the left, until we have passed thy borders." (Num. xx. 17.) Israel sent messengers unto Sihon king of the Amorites, making the same request, in nearly the same terms. "And Sihon would not suffer Israel to pass through his border." Sihon not only refused a passage through his territory, but in addition to the refusal, "he came to Jahaz, and fought against Israel," and the result was, that "Israel smote him with the edge of the sword, and possessed his land." This is a faithful representation of the history of the christian church, in its journey through the wilderness of this world to the land of promise. The elder brother, the Jewish nation, rejected the gospel, and because of this has been cast away for a season. The true Israel of God have since then been subjected to great persecution, with but little intermission, which we know is to terminate in the destruction of that power by which they have been assailed; and the people of the saints of the Most High shall yet possess the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heavens. "Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done unto the Amorites. And Moab was sore afraid of the people, because they were many: and Moab was distressed because of the children of Israel." The parallel to Balak's case is to be found among those nations who, since the reformation, have embraced the protestant faith, and whose governments have manifested a laudable fear, if sincere, lest the

unchristian usurpation of ecclesiastical power by church dignitaries should impede and obstruct the due administration of civil government. It is not surprising that conscientious statesmen (all have not been so,) should have desired to place checks upon the exercise of a power, proved by the history of the past to be destructive of the welfare of the commonwealth. Liberty to preach the gospel is all that Christ claims for His church during the times of the regeneration; and it needs nothing more. The members of Christ's church, as members of the commonwealth, are, like other citizens, entitled to the protection of civil law; but to ask the exercise of the authority of the civil magistrate in aid of the support and propagation of Christ's cause, is to pollute the sanctuary, and dishonour the Redeemer. Every member of a civil government is accountable to God for every act of his public, as well as his private life; and wo unto that man who has not made the glory of the King of kings, and the happiness of the community, the only aim of his exercise of power. The true relation of the church to the state, is that of the heavens to the earth. In the heavens are set the sun, the moon, and the stars, as the lights of our earth; so the church is the light of the world, and as such, must be set on an hill—must occupy a position of wide separation from all secular and state influence of whatever kind. Unhappily for the interests of the christian religion, protestant governments have not contented themselves with an endeavour to restrain the tyrannical use of an unchristian power; they have been taught the doctrine of Balaam. An idol is that which a man substitutes in his heart for the service and worship of the true God. The apostle Paul explains that covetousness is idolatry.

Truth must be spoken in love. Evil is done when the truth is spoken either rashly or in anger. A man must use every precaution lest he give offence to weak brethren. He must take great care that he cause not the truth to be evil spoken of. Within the last few years, and at the present time, the subject now under consideration has occasioned much controversy; and it cannot be said that the disputants have conducted their warfare in a truly christian spirit. I should be grieved if any christian brother regard any thing I say as originating in a desire to advance the views of either party, because they are their views. In regard to the doctrine of Balaam, it is to be feared that it prevails to a greater or a less extent in every section of the christian church, so that all have need to examine themselves. Far be it from me to write in terms condemnatory either of the government of Great Britain, or of the churches planted in this highly favoured island. They have many faults and many blemishes; yet I cannot review the history either of the nation or its churches, and not bear testitimony that in both aspects there is manifested a zeal for God, although in some things it is not according to knowledge. The acts of the legislature, within the last few years, could only be passed by the senators of a great nation under the guidance of Almighty God, although it is to be feared, that by many of them that guidance has neither been sought nor recognised when vouchsafed. Within the space of twenty-one years, commencing with the year 1828, we have repealed our test and corporation acts; we have removed the civil disabilities of our countrymen who adhere to the Roman Catholic religion; we have had political reform; we have, at much expense of treasure, emancipated our slave

population; we have abolished the tax upon bread; we have removed the restrictions upon commerce and navigation; and now our government is recommending for the adoption of parliament measures that will sow the seeds of human liberty in those wide spread colonial dependencies of the British empire. These are signs of the times full of hope and encouragement. It will not do for parties to declaim against the originators of these measures, and charge them with tergiversation. Whatever may have been the motives of the men, it is not for their fellow-men to judge; of the excellency of their measures—of the actual good they have done their country—there cannot be two opinions: they deserve well of the present generation, and the succeeding one will do them full justice. It should be the earnest desire of all that they whom God has thus honoured as national benefactors, may have within them a feeling of conscious rectitude, and may possess that blessing which maketh rich, and addeth no sorrow. It is true, many things that have been done have been the occasion of disaster to some members of the commonwealth; and if this could have been avoided, or if it can yet be remedied, it should be done, and that without delay. I cannot sympathise with those who, because there are iniquito laws upon our statute book, seek only their repeal, having no regard to the interests of those whose circumstances may have been formed under them, and whose ruin may be caused by their removal. The obstinate resistance of such parties to the abolition of such laws is no justification of the conduct of their opponents, when they manifest a reckless indifference about the consequences of what they seek to accomplish. There is no case of necessity so great as to justify a violation of that

law which teaches man to do unto others as he would be done by himself; and the perversity or selfishness of one class, even when indisputably evident, should not provoke another class to do justly without loving mercy. Would to God that the angry contentions, and bitter strifes of political antagonists were supplanted by that charity that suffereth long and is kind, and that thinketh no evil. Those who have been injured in their condition and circumstances should endeavour to take a large and comprehensive view of what has been done. I know not what induced the several individuals who proposed and carried these measures, except in so far as they have themselves declared their motives; and it is unfair to judge of them contrary to their own declarations, without evidence of a kind which it is next to impossible to obtain, for who can search a man's heart but God. Of one thing I am confident, that every one of these measures were needful to the salvation of our country in these perilous times. They were enacted just in time to save us from those internal commotions and convulsions which have already passed over the nations of Europe, and which still threaten to engulf them in one common ruin. I ask my suffering fellow-countrymen, whether would you prefer the insecurity of property attendant upon such a state of matters—not knowing the day nor the hour when your substance and yourself may be destroyed —to the stability and security which must belong to all the institutions of a nation zealous to reform what is evil, at the same time preserving inviolate what is good? Do not compare yourself as you are, with yourself as you were; but rather contrast what you are, with what you might have been, if the measures so injurious to your interests had not been passed. You may be

assured it is the Lord's doing, and it has been done in mercy. Trust not in uncertain riches, but trust in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.

It is somewhat remarkable that when confining itself to civil matters the legislature has done much that is commendable, it has grievously erred when it has meddled with matters of religion. It is matter of sincere thankfulness, that parties of various political opinions are becoming agreed, that the masses of our population must no longer be left uneducated and uncared for. It is still more gratifying to find, that the idea of education without religion is propounded by few among those who profess to be interested in this matter, the vast majority regarding a religious training for our youth as indispensable to the happiness and order of the commonwealth. I hesitate not to express my belief in the existence of a sincere desire, in the minds of our rulers, to do good to the country in this respect, if they could but devise a plan that would harmonize its innumerable conflicting interests. In this, however, their zeal, laudable and well meant though it be, is not according to knowledge; and they may be assured the time is past when any British government, however wise in matters of civil polity, shall be able to prepare a national scheme of religious education. Let them be advised to give up for ever their futile attempts, they being productive of nought but contention. Let them confine themselves as rulers to that which God has committed to them; and as christians and citizens, co-operate with their countrymen, in their various localities, for the dissemination of religion and the advancement of the cause of education. Thus will they be, in their twofold capacity, benefactors to their country and examples to others. There are

other two instances to which I shall refer, in each of which, religion was the occasion of measures being introduced by the government of the day and sanctioned by the legislature. If I could imagine that the men who proposed these measures were so bent upon the accomplishment of a scheme of worldly policy, as to deaden their scruples about the propriety of their attempted interference with the religion of a large number of their fellow-countrymen, I would be something more than ashamed, I would tremble for the consequences of such conduct. Viewed in any light, the Maynooth Endowment Bill was unworthy a great nation. It reflects as little credit upon the donors as it does upon the receivers. It is not because of the paltry pittance that is given from year to year; if it would really make our unhappy countrymen of the sister island better in any one way—if it would alleviate their misery and promote their comfort, I would not grudge ten times the amount annually from the national treasury. It is not because I fear any thing from popery in its opposition to protestantism, if the preservation of our religion is only compatible with doing injustice to those who profess its very opposite, it is not the true religion of Christ, and the sooner all creeds are placed upon a level, in the eye of the sovereign as a civil ruler, the better for our nation. It is not because I am insensible to the dangers which threaten us if Ireland be left as she is, without the application of remedial measures, that have for their object the removal of her social and political evils. The call for these is loud; it has been long continued. Will the nation not hear it, and be at length aroused to care for the miseries, and seek the amelioration of the condition of that distracted and unhappy land? The grounds

of objection to that fatal measure are of a more serious character. The same principle manifests itself in the bill of 1848, having for its object the renewal of diplomatic relations with the court of Rome; and it is also the cause of that much cherished and often avowed desire of many politicians to endow the Roman Catholic priesthood of Ireland. I cannot, I will not impute motives to any man. I sincerely trust our rulers have done it in ignorance, and not wilfully. I cannot, however, conceal from myself the godless and tyrannous principle of each and all of these measures. What are they but a revival of the obsolete usage of a dark age? What are they but attempts by rulers to govern, not by justice, not by wisdom, yea, not even by religion? What is the fact? Do not those who support these measures call themselves protestants? Do they not believe that popery is destructive alike of civil and religious liberty? Does the fact not stare them in the face that the social evils of Ireland are moral in their origin? Nevertheless, they hesitate not to carry into effect one measure; to avow a desire to carry another; to bring to maturity a third, the positive effect of each of which is to place a protestant government in the unseemly position of keeping in subjection a portion of the nation by means of what is acknowledged to be a superstition, and the peculiar stigma of which is that Great Britain, the land of freedom, a nation enjoying true liberty, has stooped to attempt to govern one third of the population by means of a spiritual tyranny she heartily despises. On one account these things give cause of thankfulness. They have called forth an expression of the religious feeling of this country, that must give joy to every sincere christian. But they have done more; they have taught the nation

and its rulers a solemn but an encouraging lesson. Who will deny that Great Britain is the object of Divine care and solicitude? Who will dispute that her destiny is a great one? Left to our rulers in this matter, we should have been at this day participating in the sin of alliance with that which is doomed to destruction. A partaker in the sins of Babylon, we should have been a partaker of her plagues. Blessed be God, who suffered not our senators to show a willingness to do this, until the time had come when He would render such an attempt nugatory and futile. Truly all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. The events of Providence now referred to are most instructive—full of warning to those who will not recognise God's hand in all things—full of encouragement to those who wait for the coming revelation of our Lord and Saviour. In all civil matters our rulers are guided right; it is only when they interfere with what belongs to God that they are permitted to err, in order to rebuke their presumption when they trench upon the province of Jehovah Himself. But oh, hear it, ye despisers of the true God! while He thus teaches wisdom He passeth by iniquity, and delivers us from the perilous consequences of our own ungodliness.

No man may lightly speak evil of the churches in Great Britain at the present day. In all sections there are fruits unto holiness. There never was a time since the days of the apostles, in which the blossoms of true piety were so largely manifested. I make no exception of any denomination, whether they be Episcopalian or Independent, Presbyterian, or Methodist, or Baptist, Establishment or Dissenter, among all the work is progressing; truth is being honoured by each according to

knowledge, and for this cause every believer should thank God, and take courage. I trust my christian friends will understand that I come not to condemn them, but rather to commend their zeal and faithfulness, and point out what yet remains for them to do. I write with the certain confidence, that what I say, will give great and unending joy to all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Their love to their Divine Redeemer, and their earnestness to see Him glorified upon earth, will speedily reconcile them to whatever, in the things now about to come to pass, there may be, injurious to their own intersts in relation to time.

The doctrine of Balaam is not confined to statesmen and ecclesiastics. It is held by many even of those who are in the foremost rank of its opponents. It has a twofold result, idolatry and fornication. It is injurious to the soul and to the body of man. It defiles them both. Covetousness is idolatry. This inspired interpretation points to our first parents in paradise, to whom the command was given, "thou shalt not covet." In the garden of Eden alone do we behold man figuratively in that state which God destined him for; and in the scripture narrative of what transpired there, will be found, the key to the explanation of what our Lord designs us to understand by the doctrine of Balaam. "And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it, and to keep it. And the Lord God

commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Gen. ii. 8, 9, 15—17.) From these verses we learn that Jehovah made abundant provision for the sustenance of man, provided for him a suitable occupation, and gave him a commandment by no means grievous. In paradise there could be neither care nor anxiety about the meat that perisheth with the using; where there was every thing that was pleasant to the sight and good for food, there was not room to desire more lawfully. "And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof. And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed." (Gen. ii. 18, 21—25.) We have here a marvellous display of the Divine goodness. He reveals His purpose and His will in relation to man. He has made every provision for the personal and domestic happiness of the human family. For the full enjoyment of every feeling and desire of which sinless humanity partakes, God has made manifold provision; and whatever apparent confusion and disorder may exist in the world, can never be traced to any defect in the

original plan of God, either in its purpose or execution. It is most gratifying to know, that the end will resemble the beginning. The groaning of creation is not to continue for ever. Paradise will yet be restored. The garden of Eden will reappear. The whole earth shall yet be what paradise, what Eden was. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." (1 Cor. xv. 26.) So that every vestige of sin and its consequences shall be removed from the earth, before the resurrection of the dead takes place. "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon; they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God." (Isa. xxxv. 1, 2.) "I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah-tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir-tree, and the pine, and the box-tree together; that they might see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it." (Isa. xli. 18—20.) "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." (Isa. lv.

13.) "For, behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people; and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner, being an hundred years old, shall be accursed. And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble: for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them. And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain." (Isa. lxv. 17—25.) These predictions will be fulfilled in the present state of being; and they foretell a state of earthly happiness not inferior to Eden as regards material comforts, and by many degrees superior in spiritual joy, for there will be causes of thankfulness and gratitude to Almighty God, which formed no part of the bliss of Eden. "Elias truly shall first come and restore all things." (Mat. xvii. 11.) "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be

blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." (Acts iii. 19—21.) We are plainly taught, not only that the end of the world will resemble the beginning, but also that all its intermediate stages have been preparatory and subservient to that end. From the beginning of the world, down through all its history, God has been declaring the end. All events, all changes, every phase of human society, have been controlled and regulated for the accomplishment of this end. Every thing done for and by the church, and in the world, has been made to work out the glorious purpose of the great Creator; and scripture history is but illustrative of the manner of the final completion of God's work, in the restitution of all things, to which all prophecy points, and by which the sayings of all the prophets will be completely fulfilled. Every important event recorded in the Bible has its parallel in later times. "Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read; no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them." (Isa. xxxiv. 16.) "That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past." (Eccl. iii. 15.) "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done, is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the sun. Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See this is new? it hath been already of old time which was before us." (Eccl. i. 9, 10.) "We have also a more sure word

of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Peter i. 19—21.) Our Lord, speaking of the last days, says, "As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be in the days of the Son of man. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." (Luke xvii. 18, 28, 30.)

"And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind. And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day." (Gen. i. 24, 26, 27, 31.) "Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise as some men count slackness." (2 Peter iii. 8, 9.) So that the six days of the creation of all things, are six thousand years from the time God said, Let there be light; and six thousand years from the completion of the first creation until the restitution of all things, are with God six days. During the last thousand years the events will correspond with the work of creation on the sixth day. "Let the earth;" that is, the portion of the globe separated from the sea, and called the dry land. The first earth was the land of Palestine. The second, or new earth, is the island of Great Britain. "Bring forth the living creature after his kind." In prophecy, this is

the figure used to denote earthly governments, the civil polity of nations; and it illustrates the rise of the British empire, and the purpose of God to unfold a pattern in the fulness of time, from which all other nations shall be taught the will of God in regard to this matter. When the time of the end comes, then God will regenerate mankind—create man anew in His own image, and after His own likeness. This shall be the new heavens. "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark xvi. 15.) "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations: and then shall the end come." (Mat. xxiv. 14.) "Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not; and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee, because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee." (Isa. lv. 5.) "The abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee. For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted." (Isa. lx. 5, 12.) Then "the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." (Dan. vii. 27.) Then also shall be seen the new heaven and the new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth will have passed away, and there shall be no more sea. (Rev. xxi. 1.)

"The first Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven." (1 Cor. xv. 47, 48.) Both occupied a federal relationship to the children of the kingdom. All were originally created in Adam living souls. All are created anew in Christ, and obtain eternal life. All partake of the nature of the first Adam,—all must partake of the nature of the second Adam. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the midst of the garden of Eden, was made a test of obedience to the first Adam. Perhaps it would be more in harmony with man's original state to say, that it was made an evidence of his trust in God—his confidence in Jehovah. So long as that tree remained untouched by Adam, it was a visible testimony of his supreme love to God, and unlimited confidence in Him. When God said, In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die, He did not utter these words as a threat, or even as a penalty annexed to disobedience, in the sense in which among men such things are understood. This would have been at variance with God's character, and also inconsistent with the state of innocence in which God created man. The perfection of that state is described in the 2d chapter of Genesis, in which we are taught, that every thing that could be done for man in an earthly state of being was done. That although capable, as we now know, of a higher and a greater happiness and glory than that of Eden, still all things were perfect of their kind in the first paradise; man could then desire nothing more. "They were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed." These words are meant to inform us of the perfection of the earthly nature of our first parents, also the perfection of

their earthly relationship to each other. They needed no covering. They had no imperfection to conceal. They were unconscious of any defect. They were holy —they could not be ashamed. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden of Eden, so also was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They were, so to speak, side by side. Our first parents were informed by their Creator that they were not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; if they did, He further told them, they were sure to die. There are various aspects in which the transactions in Eden are intended to be viewed. They first demand our attention as a moral transaction between the Creator and His creatures. Can any one dispute the fact, that what God asked from His creatures was reasonable and just? Yea, to stop here would be to detract from the glory of Him whose glory is manifested in this, as in all His other works. Is it possible to conceive what less could have been required by God from man, as a manifestation of the relation in which they stood to each other? Had there been one tree alone of which he was to eat, and all the rest forbidden, still it was enough if God said he was not to eat of them, it was reasonable that man should obey. Had man been left alone without a companion, he could not with justice have complained, if such had been his Creator's will. This was not, however, the way in which he was dealt with. All that Divine wisdom and goodness could contrive was done, in order to perfect his happiness; and what was asked was not only reasonable in itself, but it was essential to the preservation of that very happiness which he enjoyed. Love to God, belief in His truth, was then, even as now, and for ever shall be, the source of human happiness. It was not the beauty

and grandeur of paradise—it was not the existence of every thing that was pleasant to the sight and good for food—it was not even the perfection of their own nature, and the perfection of their relationship to each other, that made the garden of Eden a paradise, and our first parents happy: these were the creatures—this was the body. Without the Creator and the Spirit, Eden would have bloomed in vain. So that God's command to Adam was the very essence of his enjoyment, obedience to which alone could make him happy. The sin of our first parents was unbelief. They did not believe what God had said. They eat of that tree of which God commanded them not to eat; and this they did, although forewarned that in doing so they would surely die. Apart altogether from any considerations of the higher and greater purpose God had in view in permitting this to happen, the transaction by itself is one glorifying to God, and the conduct of man is wholly inexcusable.

We shall now look at this matter in its relation to the eternal purpose of the Godhead, and we shall find in it a representation of the history of the human family. While all the scenes recorded, and all the acts done, are real in themselves, they, nevertheless, contain, under a figure, the representation of what was to come. Adam himself was a figure of Him that was to come, that is, the Lord from heaven. Eve, the mother of all living, was a figure of Jerusalem, which is above, and is free, which is the mother of us all. "The Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof. And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her to the man." (Gen. ii. 21, 22.) This was a figure of the sleep of death to which

the Lord Jesus, the second Adam, subjected Himself: "and when the soldiers came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe." (John xix. 33, 34.) Thus it is that Christ gave Himself for the church, "that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph. v. 26, 27.) "And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh." (Gen. ii. 23, 24.) So in like manner believers are members of the Lord's body, of His flesh, and of His bones. "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church." (Eph. v. 30—32.) The marriage union typifies a great mystery. Every husband and wife are, or ought to be, a figure of the Lamb and His wife. The explanation of this great mystery will unfold in a clear light the great sin of holding the doctrine of Balaam, and the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes. In the temptation of Eve, Satan beguiled her, and she did eat. She was taught the doctrine of Balaam, which is the doctrine of the wicked one, the mystery of iniquity, personified by a man. It was her trust in God, her belief in the truth which Satan assailed;

and it would be well for all christians ever to remember, it was through the lust of the flesh that Satan kindled the lust of the eye, and inflamed the pride of life. She gave unto her husband with her, and he did eat. Satan had to use great subtlety in his seduction of Eve; that, however, accomplished, Adam's affection for his wife made him an easy prey. It does not appear that he needed any persuasion. She gave, and he did eat. Adam's love to his wife was the occasion of his sin, which resulted in his death, because of the curse. So Christ loved the church, and He who knew no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth, was made a curse for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. "Ye are my friends, (saith the Lord,) if ye do whatsoever I command you." (John xv. 14.) Faith is that act by which a man leaves his father and mother, and cleaves unto his wife; it is a putting off the nature which he receives by natural descent, the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; it is the being renewed in the spirit of his mind, and putting on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; all things are become new." (2 Cor. v. 17.) "There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John iii. 1—3.) The kingdom

of God is within us. Like our first parents, our eyes must be opened ere we know that we are naked; and by reason of use we must have our senses exercised to discern both good and evil. The law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ; of His own will begat He us with the word of truth. "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." (Psalm cxix. 130.) "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." (Psalm cxix. 18.) "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." (Rom. xii. 2.) "Whom God did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called." (Rom. viii. 29, 30.) "The righteousness which is of faith speaketh in this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above;) or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the deep.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Rom. x. 6—9.) The truth is exceedingly plain if men would but receive it. The only way of being united to Christ is by believing on Him; and "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Rom. x. 17.) To confess Christ is to call upon Him, "for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Rom. x. 13.) The only thing one man can do for

another in this matter is to tell him of Christ. Andrew told Peter, and brought him to Jesus. Philip told Nathaniel. The woman of Samaria, with whom Jesus discoursed at Jacob's well, went her way into the city, and saith to the men, "Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? Then they went out of the city, and came unto him." (John iv. 29, 30.) Therefore the apostle says, "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?" (Rom. x. 14, 15.) Sent by whom? I do not say that care, yea, the greatest possible care, should not be taken in the selection of men to preach the gospel; "and the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets." (1 Cor. xiv. 32.) But it is a sad mistake when preachers are invested with, or lay claim to, an exclusive right of preaching to their fellow-men the unsearchable riches of Christ, and when they condemn as unscriptural what is designated lay preaching. Alas! for the church and the world, men's mouths have been truly stopped, and no man witnesseth for Christ except for hire. There is the germ of a return to a better state of things now manifesting in the rapid growth and extension of sabbath schools. The charm is dispelled, and very shortly we shall see the joyful sight which is to usher in the latter-day glory, when kings shall become nursing fathers to the church by living lives of godliness; by teaching others what they have been taught themselves; by laying aside their regal dignity when they enter the house of God, not to take order, but to worship. It will be a happy day for this world when every man stands in

the liberty wherewith Christ hath made him free; the liberty of judging for himself, and also of preaching to others that word which brings eternal salvation when believed. It is grieving to hear men of learning, men of talent, and not unfrequently men of undoubted piety, in their places in parliament, and in the world, speaking as if truth were committed to the exclusive keeping of a class; as if every man was not free, yea, bound by the most solemn obligation to judge for himself, and equally shut up to the duty of confessing his faith, his own faith, and not the faith of another man, before the world. These things ought not to be so. True, there must be order in the church of Christ. Men set apart, being chosen by their fellow-men for the work of the ministry, and the perfecting of the saints. Thus it is, that "the Spirit and the Bride say come." It is evident that in the primitive order of the church the office of preaching was not limited to one man in a congregation; for the apostle Paul says, "Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge." In those days the assembled church realized the presence of the Spirit, and it does appear, that views of truth were suggested to the mind of one hearing, which it was profitable to declare; therefore the apostle further says, "If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace." Moreover, the apostle declares, "Ye may all prophecy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted;" and he further adds, "Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophecy." None are prohibited from speaking in the assembly of the church or congregation but women. (1 Cor. xiv. 29—39.) This was the spirit of Moses, for he said, "Would God all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit

upon them." (Num. xi. 29.) It was the spirit of our Lord. "And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us." (Luke ix. 49.) It was the rule upon which the first christians acted: "they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word." (Acts viii. 4.) It is the last command of Scripture: "Let him that heareth say come:" (Rev. xxii. 17;) and if every believer in the present day had the spirit of a Paul, they would all find work enough to do in preaching the gospel. Of all errors, that is the most obstructive to the spread of the gospel which teaches God's people to live from day to day as if they could do nothing by personal labour to bring others to the knowledge of the truth. Surely the fact that our Lord chose His apostles, the founders of the christian church, from among men for the most part like mechanics of the present day, none of them being priests, or scribes, or lawyers, or rulers in the Jewish church, is a strong rebuke of that doctrine which teaches men to subject their faith to what is called the church; the practical meaning of the term being, ecclesiastical superiors or teachers. This is, if not the actual doctrine of Balaam, at least one source from which it springs; and let those who hold it be assured, they are their own worst enemies; for if they would teach that every member of Christ's body must work—if they would urge upon every man the duty of witnessing for Jesus—if they would pray to God to give them wisdom to devise plans by which they could employ all the talent and ability of Christ's people in Christ's service, their own profession would be in no danger; the cause of

Christ would rapidly progress, and christian graces, now rolled up in a napkin and buried in the earth, would be called into active operation; and then would be seen a living church, holding forth a living testimony for the glorious Redeemer; then would every disciple be a living epistle, known and read of all men; then would all men take knowledge of believers that they had been with Christ; then would there be such an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, such an abundance of blessing from on high, as has not been witnessed since the days of the apostles. Let ministers awake; let them know that their true safety consists not in an exclusive limitation of the privilege of preaching the gospel; such a doctrine, if permitted by God to take its full course, would soon make the most christian church on earth nothing better than a lifeless body. Faith is dead, except it be in healthful exercise; and we have much cause to thank God for His wondrous mercy in keeping alive among us so much vital christianity, while we have been practically, but not intentionally, doing our utmost to extinguish it. The happiest christian ministers are those who have the care of working congregations—churches whose members are taught and encouraged to labour personally for Christ. Those christian communities are most blessed who are taught this important doctrine, and who in practice carry it out; whereas those ministers and those people who persuade themselves, that the not forsaking of the assembling of themselves, together from sabbath to sabbath is the sum and substance of what is required as a public confession of Christ, will be found to know little of real christian happiness. Idleness and inactivity are incompatible with christianity; it is high time the delusion were dismissed; the day is at hand that will try every

man's work; take heed lest yours be but a form of godliness, without its power. "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion." (Amos vi. 1.)

"Nicodemus saith unto Jesus, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Nicodemus, be it observed, speaks of a man's natural birth; his being born into the world a man-child; and our Lord's reply to his inquiry is of great meaning. "Jesus answered, verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Jesus says it may seem a great mystery, and so the apostle declares it to be; nevertheless, I tell you of a truth, except your body and your soul be born of water and of the Spirit; except your flesh be destroyed, and your spirit renewed; except that nature which you received from your earthly parents by ordinary generation be entirely and completely put away, and you be born again, you cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven; that is, become a member of my body; a citizen of the heavenly Canaan, the new Jerusalem. This is the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost. Wherefore we must present our bodies a living sacrifice upon the altar of our faith, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service. The water of regeneration is neither the sprinkling nor the dipping at baptism, that is but putting away the filth of the flesh; and if either the one or the other could in any sense, and to any extent, truly prepare a man for an abundant entrance into the kingdom of God, who would be shut out? certainly not dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. Many such were baptized

unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea; but with them God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Jesus is the first-born among many brethren. He took part of flesh and blood, yet without sin. The human nature of Jesus Christ must be born again. He said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Luke xii. 50.) Again, "For their sakes I sanctify myself." (John xvii. 19.) The captain of our salvation was made perfect through suffering. Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. They who enter the kingdom of heaven must do so by the door, and Christ is the door. His disciples must follow Him. The reason of Jesus being baptized by John was, as a sign of that change which should pass upon His human nature, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost. In this respect Jesus was like those whom He is not ashamed to call His brethren. Therefore it is said, God was manifest in the flesh, and justified in the Spirit.

Christ's blood cleanses from all sin. Except as an atonement for the sins of others He could not have suffered; but by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. The moment a man truly believes in Christ, all his sins are forgiven; and being justified by faith, he has peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. This is what Jesus said to Nicodemus, when He spoke of a man seeing the kingdom of God. From the same moment commences the washing of regeneration; for Christ says unto His followers, "Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of, and with the baptism that I am baptized,

withal shall ye be baptized." The water of regeneration is that great tribulation, out of which the apostle John was told those came, whom he saw in the vision stand before the throne and the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands. God saith, "Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction." (Isa. xlviii. 10.) Again, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." (Isa. xliii. 2.) "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" That is, we become partakers of his sufferings: and this is the sense in which the apostle Paul and every christian "bears about in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus." (Gal. vi. 17.) In which sense also all believers "fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in their flesh for his body's sake, which is the church." (Col. i. 24.) "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us." (Rom. v. 3—5.) Jesus adds, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." (John iii. 6.) In other words, "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." (1 Cor. xv. 48.) Again, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, that ye must be born again;" for "as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now, this I say,

brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." (1 Cor. xv. 49, 50.) This is that wondrous change which faith working by love produces in human nature, of which circumcision in the old dispensation, and baptism with water in the new, are intended to be signs; the seal being the testimony of God's Spirit with a man's own spirit, bearing witness that he is Christ's. Therefore it is that the Spirit is called the Spirit of adoption, because the adoption is the redemption of the body; and by the Spirit we are sealed unto the day of redemption. "Now the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts." (Gal. v. 22—24.) The teaching of Scripture, of forms and ceremonies, of providence, of the law and of the gospel, of Moses and the prophets, of Christ and the apostles, is uniform in regard to this great truth. Christ is the beginning and the ending of all things; and He is also the true Sun—the Sun of Righteousness who was to arise with healing in His wings. "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." (Titus ii. 11—14.) This is the true doctrine of God. These things ought Christ's ministers to speak, and exhort and rebuke with all authority, for they are the

words of truth. "Nevertheless, the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth." (1 Tim. iv. 1—3.) "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come: for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." (2 Tim. iii. 1—5.) "Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core. These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage." (Jude 11, 16.) This is that enemy which was to come in like a flood. And "when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." (Isa. lix. 19.) These ungodly spirits are the true fiery serpents which the Lord has sent, and which now dwell among His own people, of which the fiery serpents the Lord sent among the Israelites in the wilderness, are but a figure; and the lifting up of a suffering Saviour, by a preached gospel, producing faith in the hearts of the Israel of God, is the true brazen serpent,

of which that lifted up by Moses in the wilderness was a figure. Therefore it is said, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." (1 Peter iv. 12, 13.) Glorious truth: when these things begin to come to pass, our redemption draweth nigh. The hour is coming, yea, glory be to God in the highest, peace on earth, good-will to man, the hour is now come that the Son of man should be glorified. In the hour of our Lord's trouble and exceeding great sorrow, He prayed unto His Father; "Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." (John xii. 27, 28.) God was glorified in the cross of Christ, in the sufferings of Messiah. For because of these sufferings God is just in punishing for ever the wicked, at whose hands and by whose malice and hatred they were inflicted; and He is also at the same time the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus, who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification. But the Father has promised to glorify His name once more. The sufferings of Christ are a full atonement for all the sins of His people; but the sufferings of believers are the measure of the glory which shall be revealed in them; "for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." (2 Cor. iv. 17.) Therefore it is said, "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with

the same mind. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil doer, or as a busy-body in other men's matters. For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well-doing, than for evil-doing." (1 Peter iv. 1, 15; iii. 17.) The Father glorified His name in the sufferings of Jesus, because they declare Him just. He will glorify it again in the sufferings of His people at the hands of devils and wicked men, when in the last days their fury shall be let loose; when there shall be such a time of trouble as never was since there was a nation even to that same time. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried. Then shall be witnessed the faith and patience of the saints of God. Like minded to their Master in the days of His flesh, their hearts will bleed even for those who hate and persecute them. Then will be witnessed the great mystery of godliness; God manifest in sinful flesh, and justified in the Spirit; suffering humanity, suffering for well-doing, suffering at the hands of the wicked and the ungodly; suffering, while in their hearts there is a love inextinguishable towards their tormentors; suffering, and while they are so, praying, labouring, that, if it be possible, their Father will forgive the sin of their persecutors, for they know not what they do. Thus will God not only purify His church, and make His people perfect through sufferings, but He will glorify His name again, and declare Himself just in bestowing upon the saints an everlasting crown, because of their "patience and faith in all their persecutions and tribulations that they endure: which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that they may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which they also suffer: seeing it is a righteous thing for God to recompense tribulation to them that

trouble them; and to them who are troubled rest with the first-fruits, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe, in that day." (2 Thess. i. 4—10.) And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of man. There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: that is, the church before the flood was distinct from the world of the ungodly, "the water;" although they dwelt among them, "in the water." That then, as now, Noah, a preacher of righteousness, preached by the same Spirit that quickened the Lord of glory, after He had once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust; and he preached in faith and patience unto the spirits of those who, when they were eating and drinking, walking in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries, thought it strange that Noah did not run to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of him. These were sometime disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing; but they are now in prison, and shall give account to Him that is ready to judge the

quick and the dead—that is, the sanctified and the unbelieving. For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead—that is, to them that believe not—that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit—that is, that they might bring forth the fruits of righteousness before men, while they had the answer of a good conscience towards God. The world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished. God spared not the old world, but saved Noah, the eighth, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly. The ark wherein few, that is eight souls, were saved by water, is a figure of the manner whereunto baptism doth also now save us by the resurrection of Jesus Christ; not the sprinkling or the washing the body with water externally; this is but a figure itself, just as Noah's ark is a figure. Circumcision under the law is precisely the same with outward baptism under the gospel. Both are signs, neither of them being the thing signified. Both are retrospective, and both are prospective in their application. Abraham received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised. Now David describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputed righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. Abraham believed God, and therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. What did he believe? When he was about an hundred years old, he considered not his own body now dead, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb, but he believed God who quickeneth the dead, and calleth

those things which be not as though they were: against hope he believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations. The great truths, of which circumcision was given as a sign, are the regeneration of the chosen seed, and the regeneration of all nations upon the earth, when the time of the restitution of all things comes. The birth of Isaac is a figure of that new birth which all must pass through ere they enter the kingdom of heaven. Isaac was not the son of Abraham and Sarah, they being as good as dead, but the son of promise, by the supernatural power of God; so every believer ceases to be the child of his father and mother, yea, though he has known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth he knows him no more, for he is a new creature. The Jews after the flesh—the Edomites—the Ishmaelites, and all descendants of Abraham according to the flesh, are not the seed; they are but figures of the many nations which in the last days were to come and bring their glory into the church of Christ. Circumcision was a most significant sign of these things. It was painful, indicating the great tribulation out of which God would bring His people, purified and made white. It taught that through sufferings believers would be made perfect. The part of the body upon which it was performed was so appointed by God to teach the great truth, that believers must be born again; that there is another seed, even the word of truth, by which of His own will God begets His people. Baptism is now what circumcision was then, a sign of the faith which believers have, yet being unbaptized. Just as Philip said to the Ethiopian eunuch, "If thou believest thou mayest be baptized." It communicates nothing. It is not even a

medium of communicating any thing. For as under the law, circumcision availeth nothing, neither uncircumcision, but a new creature; so under the gospel, the rite of baptism, the outward sprinkling of water, or dipping in water, availeth nothing, but a new creature, even by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. Baptism is, however, a significant sign, meaning precisely what circumcision did under the law. The change from circumcision to baptism, and also the fact of women being excluded under the law, but admitted under the gospel, are intended to teach a great truth. To get the explanation of this, we must go back to paradise and consider the terms of the curse. First, as to women, God said, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children." The apostle Paul says, "he that giveth in marriage doeth well." Now the suffering of believers is for well-doing, and this kind of suffering a woman has in child-bearing. Therefore the same apostle says, that if women continue in well-doing, that is, in faith, and charity, and holiness, with sobriety, they shall be saved in child-bearing. Their travail and sorrow, their suffering in the flesh in bearing children, shall fill up the measure of their sufferings in Christ unto perfection. Not that an unbelieving woman shall thus be saved. To her such anguish is but the seal of the wrath of God that shall yet more abundantly overwhelm her. What gives virtue to her sufferings is her faith and patience, a godly life, and the answer of a good conscience towards God. Further, the very cause of her travail is most significant; it teaches every woman that herself and her child must be born again; so that under the law women had a sign in child-bearing as men had in circumcision. The

curse pronounced upon the serpent will be fulfilled. It is in great measure accomplished. The enmity has existed between him and the woman, that is, the church, and between unbelievers and believers for nearly six thousand years. His head must be bruised, in the doing of which Christ hath already suffered at his hands in the flesh; but his power, though doomed to destruction, and actually sealed upon the cross of Christ, still prevails upon this earth. He is the god of this world, he is the prince of the power of the air; as such his dominion has an end: and "in that day the Lord, with his sore, and great, and strong sword, shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea." (Isa. xxvii. 1.) What God said unto the serpent, is just what circumcision signifies under the old dispensation, and baptism under the new,—that through much suffering the saints shall overcome at last. God also said unto the woman, "thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee:" and to the man the Lord God said, "cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life: thorns also shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." These words also teach the same truth, with circumcision and baptism. Now Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." (Gal. iii. 13.) There is also a set time when there shall be no more curse upon this earth, when sorrow and sighing shall flee away; "then the eyes of the blind shall be

opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped: then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing." (Isa. xxxv. 5, 6.) "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease, among the people. And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them. And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan." (Mat. iv. 23—25.) These were the sure tokens of Messiah's having come the first time, when the former rain was poured upon the earth; and they are but illustrative of the marvels of His power, His goodness, His mercy, His compassion, and His love, which are to be manifested by Him, even on this earth, when the kingdoms of this world acknowledge Him. Then shall be the time of the latter rain—even the former and the latter rain. Now circumcision was not changed to baptism, because the christian dispensation was different or more merciful than the Jewish. The three chambers in the history of the world, from the time of the fall down to the restitution of all things, teach all the same truth concerning God's purpose. God's merciful purpose was the same, and was equally manifested under each dispensation, varying not on God's part, but varying in the figures under which it was represented, in accordance with the growing intelligence and moral apprehension of men. So we find that the curse pronounced upon Satan, Adam,

and Eve, the rite of circumcision instituted in Abraham, and the form of baptism instituted by Christ, all teach the same glorious truths. The pain of circumcision, and the humiliation of woman by excluding her from it, was designed to teach, that during the existence of the Jewish church the curse would continue upon our earth; that man would, during its whole term, continue in sorrow and in the sweat of his face to eat bread; and that woman would continue in society the inferior of her husband, as well as bring forth children in sorrow. These would not, need not have been changed, were things to remain so during the whole continuance of the christian dispensation. The removal of the painful rite for one unaccompanied with pain, the institution of a sign which both male and female could participate in—this was intended as a figure of that great redemption, waiting for which the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together, even until now. It is this to which the apostle refers when he says that baptism is a figure now, similar to the ark of Noah. It is suffering for well-doing which believers must endure, when "there shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. When except those days should be shortened, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." (Mat. xxiv. 21, 22.) Like Babylon of old, and like the disobedient spirits before the flood, the end of spiritual Babylon shall be also with a flood, even a flood of ungodly men and their ungodly deeds. These shall be a furnace in which the Redeemer will purify and refine His people; and when the elect are entered into the ark, that is, baptized with the baptism of Christ, and made partakers of his sufferings—when Lot, the last christian spirit shall

have left the spiritual Sodom, then the floodgates of iniquity shall be opened: "it shall come to pass in that day, that a great tumult from the Lord shall be among them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbour, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbour." (Zech. xiv. 13.) "And they shall fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbour; city against city, and kingdom against kingdom." (Isa. xix. 2.) "And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms; and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother." (Hag. ii. 22.) "For, behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as the calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet, in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts." (Mal. iv. 1—3.) Thus shall the destroyers destroy each other, and thus shall God destroy them which destroy the earth. "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations or trials, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." (2 Peter ii. 9.) And to this the apostle refers when he says, "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are

therein, shall be burnt up." (2 Peter iii. 10.) That is, all things shall be changed, and paradise restored; then shall be the time of the restitution of all things, spoken of by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began. Enoch prophesied of these days, and he was himself a figure of the happiness of men, when they shall walk with God, and like him shall be translated to the state of eternal glory without tasting of death; for before their translation they shall have this testimony, that they pleased God. Without faith it is impossible to please Him. Oh! bear in mind, all ye who wait for the hope of Israel, "he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Heb. xi. 5, 6.) It is a faithful saying, worthy of all acceptation, and it must be fulfilled, that "godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." (1 Tim. iv. 8.) Notwithstanding, when the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith in the earth? Shall He find His church, His professing people, looking for His coming, waiting His approach? Alas! alas! Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? In His house are those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, and the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes; but He "will send Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." (Mal. iv. 5, 6.) Thus saith the Lord.

The doctrine of Balaam is, that which a man or the church substitutes in the heart for God. You eat things sacrificed unto idols, and you commit fornication, when

you trust in any thing but the blood of Jesus, which cleanseth from all sin, and love any one more than you love your God. Idolatry, as practised among the heathen, has made those parts of the earth where they dwell the habitations of horrid cruelty. Fornication is a sin which, if unrestrained in the good providence of God, or if permitted its full consequences, would make christian Britain a moral waste, destroy social order, and natural affection. There would be no kind husbands and affectionate wives; there would be no tender parents and loving children; there would be no happy homes or joyful hearts, if the fornicator were allowed his will. What these are to the social and political state of man, they also are to his spirit. The one is intended as a visible manifestation of the other; and as idolatry and fornication know no limits in their destructive course, as concerns the temporal well-being of men, so what they are the figure of in the christian church is as endlessly destructive.

Why do christians dispute about baptism, as if it were essential to christianity? Yea, know ye not, there will probably be more unbaptized with water and uncircumcised in the foreskin of their flesh in heaven than of those circumcised or baptized? Know ye not that many of those who have been circumcised and baptized will have the door of heaven shut against them? Not that a man dare despise or wilfully neglect any appointed institution of God. He who does so despises not the institution but Him whose it is. It is one thing to observe it because God has appointed it; it is another thing to trust in it as in any way aiding in our salvation. Can it be imagined that Abraham trusted in the circumcision of his flesh? In matters of religion the children

of the kingdom are not so wise as the men of the world. Does not the Scripture say that Abraham trusted in God, and that he received the sign of circumcision as a visible token of God's covenant with him? So, christians, ye ought to follow the faith of Abraham, and trust in your God; then shall the baptism with water be to you an outward sign of what you inwardly possess—a heart stayed upon God. We would think it unseemly had it been recorded of Abraham's household that they had contention one with the other as to whether circumcision should be performed upon them in infancy or when they reached mature age, when we know that circumcision was but a sign, and not the thing signified. Surely those are unseemly disputings, which have long existed, as to whether baptism should be the sprinkling of water upon the body, or the dipping of the body in it; whether infants or adults only should be baptized upon a profession of faith. Dear brethren, believe me, this is the teaching of Balaam. This has become an idol to you who thus contend and separate yourselves from one another on such grounds. Do be persuaded; baptism availeth nothing, whether done in infancy or in mature age; but a new creature, faith in Christ, and faith alone, is that which saves a sinner. Children are God's heritage. All who die in infancy are the Lord's. Of such is the kingdom of heaven. Why then will ye refuse to the heirs of glory with yourselves the external washing of water, if you think it important? The children of believers should be presented to the Lord in baptism as an act of faith; and if this were done as it ought to be, by solemn and earnest prayer, we should see more of the fruits of righteousness among the children of godly parents. Nevertheless, I condemn you not; let each

hold his own views if he will, but beware of making the form an idol, and thereby commit fornication. For my own part, to please believing brethren, to avoid giving offence to any, if need be, I would cheerfully accept of baptism again at the hands of my baptist brethren, while I would as willingly present my children for baptism to those who take the opposite view. Truly the kingdom of God is not meats, and drinks, or ceremonies, but love, joy, peace, and long-suffering. These things should not be so; wherefore, put away your idols and worship God, who is a Spirit, in spirit and in truth, for our Father seeketh such to worship Him.

To you who have erred still more seriously, and who pretend to a power of communicating the Spirit of God when ye baptize with water in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to you I would say, "Are ye masters in Israel, and know not that the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." (John iii. 8.) Ye are men of learning: ye know earthly things: and I will not say that ye are not men of piety. Yours, however, is a most perilous case. Can you command or control the wind? It is but a figure of the Spirit. How can ye be so infatuated? Surely ye have been taught in the school of Balaam. Know ye not that "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." (John iii. 13.) That is the Lord of glory: He alone is a quickening Spirit: with Him is the residue of the Spirit: He hath compassion on whom He will: who hath been His counsellor? Oh! vain man, what dost thou mean, when thou speakest of baptismal regeneration?

Truly there is a baptismal regeneration, but thou art a master in Israel and knowest not what it means. Hast thou thyself been baptized with the baptism of Christ? If thou hast suffered in the flesh for well-doing, then go rather and disciple others, teaching them all things whatsoever I command you, saith the Lord. If you do this you shall not be the instrument of communicating the Holy Spirit to others in sprinkling water. Thine shall be the honourable office of turning many to righteousness by the preaching of the word; which word is the sword of the Spirit, and, when wielded by Himself through your instrumentality, shall become the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. Thus shall your hearers know, by happy experience, the true baptismal regeneration, by the peace and the joy of a justified spirit, through faith in the word, and by the bringing forth, in their daily life, fruits unto holiness. If ye will hold the doctrine of Balaam, then give evidence of your possessing such a virtue by apostolical succession. Show your power, by commanding the wind to blow at your pleasure; for if ye can bestow the Spirit in baptism, ye can do that which is least; ye can control the wind, for it is a figure of the Holy Spirit in the mysterious manner in which He operates upon men. Can ye really pretend that every one ye have baptized shall be received into heaven? Surely not. And if even one only were awanting, what becomes of your boasted prerogative? Do be persuaded to cease from man thyself; and do not stand any longer between thy fellows and thy God. Thy sin is great, but, if a sin of ignorance, it shall be forgiven. Beware of persistance in it, for certainly the hour of God's judgment is come. Therefore, blessed are they that put their trust in Him alone, and who, like John

the baptist, the forerunner of the Messiah, point all men to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. To those who, in addition to holding this doctrine, go the awful length of selling for money, the fees of baptism, being, in their estimation, a most essential element in administering the ordinance, I have but one word to say: I say it in sorrow: would God ye would hear, and "repent of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." (Acts viii. 22, 23.) To you who teach men that in order to obtain forgiveness for sins, whether committed before or after they believe, they must subject themselves to bodily suffering to the extent or in the manner ye are pleased to prescribe, and to your unhappy and misguided followers I would say, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. Once justified by faith, there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. True, believers must suffer; but ye would make them suffer for their sins, whereas Christ hath made a full atonement for them. Ye would make them suffer for their evil doings, and thus encourage a life of impurity and ungodliness. Ye would make them suffer according to your will, the will of man, whose breath in his nostrils, and who is consumed before the moth. Whereas, if a christian suffers, he suffers as a christian only when he suffers for well-doing. He suffers, but he suffers as a christian only when his suffering yields unto him the peaceable fruits of righteousness. He suffers, but he suffers as a christian only when He suffers according to the will of God. His sufferings are unsought for by himself, and he cannot

escape from them with a clear conscience, or he would. But here also ye introduce the element of money. Ye will compound for a man's penances, and take his gifts. How great must be the darkness of thy mind. Thou knowest little of the faith of Moses, who, "when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." (Heb. xi. 24, 26.) Even death, which destroys every other tyrant's power, does not destroy thine; so thou sayest. Thou hast invented a purgatory, in which, at thy pleasure, souls partly saved must complete the process of their purification. And here again money is thy cry: thou sayest to the living, pay for masses to the souls of the dead. Knowest thou not that death is the last enemy? What process of intercommunication hast thou with the invisible world to enable thee to tell what men go to prison with the spirits to whom Noah preached before the flood, or which go to paradise with the Lord? This thou knowest full well, that thou never once saw a messenger from the other world, so that, could the blasphemous thought be entertained, still thy ignorance, total and complete, of what is passing in the two states of departed spirits, should have deterred thee from speaking of those things which thou knowest not. Wo unto you! for ye have gone in the way of Cain. The blood of many, many shall be required at thy hands on that day. Ye have ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core. Purgatory! truly there is a purgatory, but not thy

purgatory, and not a place of torment devised to enable thee to make gain. There is a purgatory, but not of spirits. Knowest thou not that in one moment the spirit of a man is renewed? Knowest thou not, that, unlike angels, who are spiritual essences, and complete beings as such, man's spirit can only be voluntarily changed when working in the body? There is a purgatory, and it is taught in that very passage of Scripture where thou pretendest to find the warrant for thine; but, alas! how miserable thy views of the doctrine. Thine is a doctrine of Balaam, taught and enforced that thou mayest make gain, trafficking in men's souls. The doctrine of God taught in that passage is—that thy system, and thy cruelty, and thy persecution of God's people, is the purgatory in which they shall be tried, and purified, and made white—not after death, but in this life; and then it shall be thine own destruction; that purgatory which shall burn thine own system, and destroy thine own flesh, for by thine own cruelty and wickedness shalt thou be ruined. The godless and wicked principles thou hast abetted and propagated in the world, and upon which thy system has sat for many centuries, are those very principles which have prepared, and are still to prepare, them who now support thee for the work of thy destruction. For that awful moral perversity and daring impiety, which fills the minds of multitudes among the nations over whom thou reignest, thou art accountable to thy God. Thy delusions, and the lies thou hast spoken in hypocrisy, forbidding to marry and to abstain from meats, thy sorceries and thy fornications shall yield a rich and abundant harvest, because of thy pains and labour in sowing them. Thou didst not know that the wisdom of God would be mani-

fested in the revelation of thy foolishness, teaching for gain that thou hadst power over God's purgatory. Yes, oh! doomed Babylon! thou hast power over God's purgatory. God has given thee that power because of thy unparalleled wickedness. Yes, the blood of all the saints slain from the foundation of the world shall be found in thee! Thou hast had power over the fire by which the saints have been prepared for glory, and by which the earth shall be prepared for them. Thy power has been great, and thou hast used it mercilessly and unsparingly; but the things written of thee in Scripture must all be fulfilled. Great though thy past wickedness be, there still remains to be felt and witnessed a more terrible display of thy inveterate and incurable obstinacy and iniquity. Even when the great hailstones of divine truth, every stone the weight of a talent, are falling upon thee; when thy nakedness is uncovered, and thy shame is exposed; when thou art forewarned of thy near destruction, and must speedily meet thy God, who comes clothed with the garments of vengeance; when thou knowest that thou hast but a short time to live, and when it might be expected thou wouldest walk softly, and provoke not thy God further; even then, oh, Babylon, Babylon, thou wilt once more show thy power over the purgatory of God; thou wilt seek to destroy the elect of heaven within the compass of thy dominion; and, hear it and tremble, thou shalt be successful, for there shall not be left one living spirit, one true christian within thy dominion; then when thou hast purged by a fiery trial the Israel of God, that fire, heated by thee for them, shall burn thyself; that flood of ungodliness, by which alone thou couldst have prevailed against them, after doing its work upon them, shall be

thine own destruction; that purgatory, in which thou hast burned for many centuries the witnesses of Christ, shall consume thee and thy system with an everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of His power. Oh! how just and equal are the ways of God. Thou hast made thine own bed in Tophet. Thou shalt drink for ever of that cup which thou thyself hast mixed. Do what thou wilt, thy doom is written; fall thou must, and that suddenly, at the appointed time; and know it, for these are the true sayings of God,—"This generation shall not pass away, till all these things be fulfilled." Come out of her, my people, saith the Lord, and be ye not partakers of her sins.

To all men I would say, take heed, and beware of covetousness, which is idolatry, for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesseth.

Man is related by his nature to two worlds, the present life and that which is to come. He needs the meat that perisheth with the using, and he also needs the bread which cometh down from heaven, of which, if a man eat, he shall live for ever. It is true wisdom to ask and seek for both. It is great folly to despise or neglect either. They are both equally the gift of God. "Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." (James i. 16, 17.) A man's faith connects those two things, causing them to dwell together in perfect harmony. It is the ladder set up on the earth, whose top reacheth to heaven, and upon which the angels of God, those ministering spirits sent forth to minister unto those who are the heirs of salva-

tion, ascend and descend. A man's unbelief severs that connection which God hath graciously ordained should exist between the meat that perisheth and the meat that endureth, and separates them as widely asunder as the east is distant from the west. What God has joined together in perfect harmony, man has not only sundered, but, because of his unbelief, they occupy a position of antagonism to each other. In the garden of Eden they were planted, and co-existed in perfect harmony; and they shall again be planted and co-exist in the same perfect harmony in this life, when the earth is filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. The tree of life in the midst of the garden of Eden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, are figures of the everlasting gospel and the Divine law. In paradise, Adam was dependent upon the gift of God for happiness and enjoyment as much as we are now. The word of God was a law in paradise, just as the same word is a law in the wilderness of this world. The doctrine that the just shall live by faith, which is the doctrine of God, was taught to Adam as it is taught to us. It is a great mistake to talk of a covenant of works as contrasted with the covenant of grace. God has made but one covenant, and that not with man, but with His own Son; and each dispensation, that of paradise, that of the law, and that of the gospel, are but the gradual developments of the eternal purpose of God, which He purposed in Christ before the world was. The creation of man, and the planting of him in the garden of Eden, which was eastward, were the first rays of that rising sun of Divine glory, which is destined at the evening time of this world's history to lighten the earth with its glory.

Adam's obedience in paradise would have been what our obedience is now, the obedience of faith. The Lord God commanded the man not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He did not say, Do this, and thou shalt live; but He said, Believe my word, "If thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." So that if Adam had refrained from eating, he would have believed God, and would have been justified by faith, even as faithful Abraham was. He learned, however, the doctrine of Balaam. He coveted that which God had forbidden. His lust was substituted for his love to God. The fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was preferred by him to the favour of Jehovah. It became his idol, and when he eat of it, he eat that which was sacrificed unto an idol. The lust of the flesh occasioned the defilement of his soul, and the soul when defiled died; that is, the act of disobedience being an act of man's own will, severed him from his God; the life he then lived was no longer the life which God gave him, when he became a living soul. It was not only an act of a free will that would not have been sin, and man was as free not to eat as we know he was free to eat. The act was an act of self-will, in direct opposition to God's declared will, and this was the sin of our first parents. The body without the spirit is dead, and faith without works is dead. So Adam, although a living soul, was a dead man until his faith was tried. He had a body formed by God out of the dust of the ground, into which God breathed, and man became a living soul. Observe, what is here called the soul is the same with that which the apostle James calls the body. The soul without the spirit was dead. Man, although a living soul, was a dead body. He had every property of a man in his

nature. Every faculty of mind, the immaterial part; every energy of body, the material part of his nature, were given him by God. He only became a spirit when of his own free will he brought his powers and faculties into action; and having first displayed them in an act of disobedience, from thence his spirit was the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. When a living soul, man was spiritually dead; that is, lifeless, inactive, just like a piece of exquisite machinery completed but not put in motion. And just like the same machinery until its character could be judged by the work it produced, so man was to angels, and devils, and to himself a profound mystery, until his powers were called into operation. We have here a display of the manifold wisdom of God. It is impossible for man to make any thing having endless life and energy within itself. A watch, wondrous though it be as a piece of mechanism, must be regularly wound up or it runs out. A steam engine, the great invention of modern times, is a marvellous work of man, and exhibits, in no mean degree, his great skill and power; still it is lifeless, having only action when propelled by man. But herein is manifested the wisdom of God in creating man, a being having endless life within himself; a being possessing godlike faculties and powers; a creature dependent upon his Creator for every thing, and yet independent of Him in the matter of his will; that being the spirit of a man's body, although he is a living soul. What the introduction of the Son was to the angelic world, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was to man. There the command was, believe and worship. By faith the angels kept their first estate; through unbelief the angels left their own habitation. They were intelligent beings

before the command was given them, but when it came, it was to them spirit and life. From thence the angels who believed became living spirits, because while they acted according to their own free will, they obeyed the will of God. From thence the angels who believed not became dead spirits, because while they acted according to their own free will, it was the will of their self; and self-will is not the legitimate exercise of a free will, neither is self-will the will of God. The obedience of the one produced the spirit of life; the disobedience of the other produced the spirit of death. The final result to fallen angels will be the second death. So with man—without the tree of the knowledge of good and evil he would have remained a spiritless body, although a living soul. When he partook thereof he died in spirit. There are two deaths, and there are also two resurrections. Adam when created was dead unto all works, for he had done no work when, because of God's breathing upon him, he became a living soul. This was the first death in paradise, and is a figure of the first death in the wilderness of this world. All men are by nature dead unto good works. The new birth is twofold, corresponding with the two resurrections, for we must be born of water and of the Spirit. Baptism is a figure of the birth by water, not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (Rom. vi. 3, 4.)

Now we know that baptism is a sign or figure of the

faith which a man has, being baptized. Our Lord's words to Peter are very instructive; When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. Although he had previously confessed Christ to be the Son of God, and seen His transfiguration upon the mount, it is clear he had not been converted. The fact of his denying his Lord, and his subsequent reconciliation, prove that up till that time he had not the faith of the gospel, otherwise it would have been shipwrecked. There are many reasons why none of the Lord's apostles received the gift of faith before His resurrection from the dead. But the one which chiefly concerns us at present is that which is thus expressed by the apostle James, "Of his own will begat he us, with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures." (James i. 18.) Until the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the faith which justified was a faith in God's word. It is not asked of a man to believe what he does not know. Faith is a reasonable thing; and it is an act of substantial faith when, according to the knowledge which a man has, he comes unto God, believing that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that seek Him diligently. It is a mistake to imagine that the faith of Abraham was limited to the descendants of the twelve patriarchs, under the Jewish dispensation. The twelve tribes of the natural Israel were but figures of the twelve tribes of the spiritual Israel. They were not in reality the Israel of God, because selected as the nation among whom it was God's good pleasure to give a manifestation of His glorious purpose. Their history is wholly figurative as regards the true Israel, just as the descendants of Ham, (who was one of three,) are, in their colour, and the external curse which has followed them since it was pro-

nounced upon their progenitor, figurative of the proportion (that is one-third,) of the human family, who are the children of the wicked one; and just as their history is figurative of the kind and the manner of the punishment of disobedience. It is man's own inhumanity to his fellow-man, that has made the sons of Africa a race of slaves. Away for ever with that daring impiety that would plead the authority of heaven in justification either of the atrocities or the misnamed mercies of keeping human beings in a state of bondage. True, God cursed Ham, and cursed him justly, for his spiritual wickedness. But God's command to all men is, "Love thy neighbour as thyself:" and know it ye who, for gain, traffic in human flesh—know it ye who, to enrich yourselves, make poor your fellow-men—know that the Judge standeth at the door—the books are now to be opened. Because of the hardness of men's hearts, a merciful and compassionate God has suffered for a long time such things; but the end of all things is at hand. Liberate, liberate the captive sons and daughters of Africa! Thy God speaketh, yea, He roars unto thee, who thyself would not submit to a light yoke—nothing when compared with the cruel bondage in which thou, a nation descended from a nation who has taught the world the noblest lessons of liberty, keepest the unhappy descendants of Ham. Imitate the example of thy parent: it is to thee I speak, oh christian America! Be wise, oh, be wise! Thou hast been taught the doctrine of Balaam. Happily thou mayest not have ran in his way. But thou holdest the doctrine, and it is a doctrine of the devil. Know that the captive must go free. Know that the time is come when there shall be no more curse. Do of thine own free-will what God now, and has always

told thee, was His will. Hesitate or refuse, and thy doom is written: the nation and kingdom that will not serve God shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted. Thy slaves will be thy ruin in a double sense. They will destroy first the life of Christ among thy people; for slavery and christianity cannot co-exist. Christianity must be the death of slavery, by the mighty power of God working in the hearts of thy children; or slavery will grieve the Spirit of God, and quench His influences; and when He withdraws, your nation shall be a lifeless corpse. Then thou wilt have two floods—the flood of ungodliness among the free, and the flood of ungodliness, accompanied by a spirit of revenge, among the captives—to contend with. The yoke of thy captivity may be an iron one, and thou mayest think thyself secure and beyond the reach of harm. So did the potentates of Europe a few years ago; but God taught them a lesson, which, if they are slow and unwilling to learn, take heed lest ye follow their example. They are now rivetting anew, and, if it were possible, they are endeavouring to make still more secure their tyrannous power. They must be told, however, that their dominion has run its course; it is ended, actually finished. The time that will elapse ere their power be scattered like dust to the four winds of heaven, were they wise, they would make use of to make their fall less terrible. But, alas! alas! they will not believe. They love oppression and hate righteousness; and now they are, while, as they foolishly imagine, laying the foundations of their power deeper and broader, and building up their walls even as it were to heaven, actually sowing the last seed which shall ripen in due time; so that when they once more find themselves securely seated, and send gifts one to

another, rejoicing that the witnesses testifying against their iniquity within their dominion are silenced; in the midst of their mirth, when their sun has reached the meridian once more, then shall break forth that deluge of human rebellion, nursed by themselves, and fanned into a flame of irrepressible fury by long and great oppression. Of this the prophet speaks, when he says in amazement and distress, "O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?" Be warned, and do thyself what God has said must be done without thy consent if thou refusest. Set the captive free. Do justly, love mercy, walk humbly with thy God. "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee: the glory of the Lord shall be thy rere-ward." (Isa. lviii. 8.)

It is presumptuous in man to limit in any degree the marvellous mercy and love of God. The darkness in which the wise Solomon died, so far as known to man—the blackness of the character of the thief upon the cross, are both instructive lessons in this respect. The earthly glory of Solomon is recognised in Scripture as the highest attainable by man while the curse rests upon our earth; but to teach that it was only a figure of the latter-day glory, his was extinguished during his life. So to speak, Solomon died before his natural death took place; and our Lord plainly tells us that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like a lily of the field. Now, what is the application of this? It is, that the earthly glory of Solomon is a figure of the earthly glory of another Solomon. That the temple built by Solomon is a figure of another temple to be built by another Solomon in the last days of this world's history; and that

the glory of these days will not be the mammon of unrighteousness, meats and drinks, but the glory of the lily, which has nothing but what it has received from God. In the last days, men will be buried with Christ in baptism, and will be raised again in newness of life. They will put off their old man. They will be unclothed, so that they may be clothed upon with their house which is from God. Their glory will be the glory of the lily. All they have they will have received. All they possess will be the gift of God. All they enjoy will be the reward of faith in God. Thus shall the glory of the Lord enter into His house, and fill the temple. Thus shall the glory of His people be the glory of their Lord, of which Solomon in all his glory was but a figure. The thief upon the cross displays as black a character as can well be imagined. He reviles his God when himself in the agonies of death, a death of ignominy for crimes of infamy. We shall see that man again; but we shall see him as we see the bare grain sown into the earth, coming forth with that body which it hath pleased God to give him; for every seed hath its own body. The glory of his body will not be equal to the glory of the body of the apostle Paul. True, he suffered, and he suffered in his body the very sufferings of Christ; nevertheless, his was a suffering for evil doing, so that while his glory will be the brightness of the firmament, it will not be the glory of its stars. Now, "we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." The salvation of the thief upon the cross teaches a lesson of illimitable charity; for whatever a man's character may have been, or is still, who knoweth but that in the agonies of death the Spirit of life may quicken his mortal body. But it also teaches that God translates men from earth to heaven without

suffering for well-doing; that is to say, not that a man who thinks himself a believer can hope to be saved, unless he is crucifying the flesh with its lusts; for know ye not that faith without works is dead? so that not a man's faith which he thinks or says he has can save him, but that faith which works in him and upon him by love; that faith which produces fruits of all kinds unto holiness. Therefore it is said, "by their fruits ye shall know them;" and again, "ye see then how a man is justified by works and not by faith only." His salvation teaches, that in the moment of dissolution eternal life may be imparted to a sinful man. Our Saviour's words, "To-day thou shalt be with me in paradise," teach that when the trumpet sounds, the spiritual trump of God—when the voice of the Son of man is heard—when the word of God is believed in the heart—then in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the dead in spirit are raised incorruptible.

Now although the twelve tribes of Israel are a figure of the Israel of God, we know that the great multitude of the redeemed, which no man can number, is of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues. Before the call of Abraham, two thirds of the whole human family were saved; one third only were the seed of the serpent. From the time of Abraham till the time of Christ, two thirds of the whole human family were also saved; only one third being the seed of the serpent. From the time of Christ till the end of the world, two thirds of the whole human family shall be saved; one third being the seed of the serpent. The number is exact and defined in God's purpose, but to man they are innumerable. The last four thousand years of the world's history is divided into two chambers; and the

parable of the prodigal son is a representation of God's procedure to men during that time. The elder brother being the Jewish church: the younger brother, the Gentiles, becoming the christian church. When the set time is come, and God appears in His glory to build up Zion, nine tenths of His people, who are to be brought into being during these four thousand years, shall be with their Lord. The woman's nine pieces of silver are safe, when she lights a candle to look for the tenth which is lost. Therefore it is said, "Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed. Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, and the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land. But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teil-tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves, so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof." (Isa. vi. 9—13.) These words spake Isaiah when he saw the glory of Christ. They refer to those desolations spoken of by Daniel the prophet, which were appointed to continue until the time of the end, when there should be such a time of trouble as never was. At that time the people of God shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. A tenth of the holy seed brought into being during the four thousand years shall shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father. The

truth that one tenth of God's people shall not sleep but be changed, is taught in a figure by Melchizedek, after whose order Christ is made a priest for ever; and to whom Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils—the spoils being all the true seed of faithful Abraham, ransomed by the Lord from the power of the destroyer. Of this Melchizedek the apostle Paul had many things to say, and hard to be uttered, because of the dulness of men's hearing. He was a figure of Christ only in his priesthood. His kingly character is not applied to Christ. Nevertheless, he, Melchizedek, was king of righteousness and king of peace; and in this character he was a figure of some one else, because, the Son of God was not made like unto him, but he was made like unto the Son of God, "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life." Daniel beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, and he saw in the night vision, not the Son of man, but "like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him, and there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, and nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Now, what is here spoken of is not the kingdom, but only a portion of the kingdom of the Eternal Son of God: and it was not the Son of man, but one like Him, who came and was brought near to the Ancient of days. The Eternal Son is "the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature: for by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be

thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist." (Col. i. 15—17.) "He that descended is the same that ascended far above all heavens, that he might fill all things." (Eph. iv. 10.) The Eternal Son is the Word of God, the King of kings, and Lord of lords. He was, and is, and ever shall be the same; so that it cannot be said of the Lord Jesus Christ, that He was brought near at the end of the world to receive a kingdom. Nevertheless, "a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment. And a man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." (Isa. xxxii. 1, 2.) He shall be like Melchizedek, king of righteousness and king of peace; and he must be made like the Son of man whom Daniel saw in the vision, "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life." This is the application of what the apostle Paul declares to be the great mystery wrapt up in the marriage union. Of this marvellous truth, the first man and his wife are a figure. God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept. When he awoke, behold there is a new creature, made by God, but made out of man. Therefore Adam said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man." Adam had neither father nor mother; as such, and as holy, he is the figure of Christ who was to come. Eve had neither father nor mother, but was taken out of man; so in a twofold sense, paradise shows how every believer is made like unto the

Son of God. He has the nature of the first Adam; so had Christ, but without sin. Christ Himself slept, and through the Eternal Spirit, the seed of His body is made a woman, and she shall be presented to Himself a glorious church, and become His bride, the Lamb's wife. So every believer must die, that is, must leave his father and his mother—must put off the old man. The Lord God must do to him what He did to Adam; out of himself make a new creature, who becomes to the man that of which woman is, in the present state of being, a figure. Further, in the transactions of paradise we have a figure of the manner in which this new creature is produced. Adam was a living soul before he was commanded not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and would not have known lust, except God had said, "Thou shalt not covet." The law was holy, and the commandment was holy, and just, and good; but sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in him all manner of concupiscence; the commandment which was ordained to life, he found to be unto death, for sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived him, and by it slew him. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is a figure of the law. When Adam eat of its fruit, sin revived or lived, and he died. Every descendant of Adam is alive without the law, and there is no respect of persons with God; for as many as have sinned without law, shall perish without law; that is, they who change the truth of God into a lie, and worship and serve the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever, because that when they knew God they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Still when the Gentiles, which have not the

law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law are a law unto themselves, which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another. It is a great mistake to imagine that none of those who grow to manhood among the heathen will be saved. It is a view of the character of God which no believer loves to contemplate, because of the pain it gives him. True, there is no other name given among men whereby we can be saved, but the name of Jesus Christ. Four thousand years elapsed, however, ere that name was preached among men; so that to limit salvation to a particular faith in the manner in which it is to be accomplished is erroneous. All who lived before Christ would in such a case have perished. Yea, the very apostles of our Lord, after three years teaching by Himself, knew not the Scriptures concerning the manner of salvation. By faith men have always been justified in God's sight; and the faith which Enoch had when he walked with God, and was translated, and had before his translation this testimony, that he pleased God, is that faith. Without such faith as he had, it is impossible to please God; and the faith he had, and with which God was pleased, was that faith which a man manifests when he comes to God believing that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. Boast not of thy faith thou who hast known the Scriptures from thy childhood. True, it is well-pleasing unto thy Father, and with its sacrifices He is delighted. But it is not greater proportionately than the faith of a poor heathen living in the midst of abominable idolatries, in whose heart there is a law written by the Spirit of

God sufficient to tell him of a living Supreme Being in whom to trust, but nothing more. God who searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins of the children of men, knoweth what is in every man; and there may be at this hour many, many poor heathens groping as it were in midnight darkness, being a law nevertheless unto themselves; and out of a heart, the very seat of Satan, they may be groaning with groanings which cannot be uttered, for deliverance from what they can neither understand nor explain—still looking upwards, still hoping and expecting something hereafter, but with such dimness as not to be perceptible to themselves. I say then, judge not before the time the work of thy God. Thou wilt admit, if many adult heathens be found in heaven, that the wisdom of God, and the love of God, and the mercy of God, and the power of God, will exceed in this display your highest conceptions: and oh! believers, if grief were possible there, thou wouldest weep the tears of bitter sorrow, that thou shouldest have enjoyed thine ease in the days of thy flesh, when thy heathen brethren were toiling and labouring in midnight darkness—calling to thee in spirit, as Paul saw in a vision of the night a man of Macedonia, praying him, saying, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us." Do be stirred up, ye who believe in God yourselves, and who know the unsearchable riches of Christ. Forsake all, give all, even life itself if need be, that the heathen may now be converted to the faith of Christ in the gospel. Their case is not more hopeless, yea, it is scarcely as hopeless, judging according to man's judgment, as the case of the thief upon the cross. Where the gospel is, the Spirit will honour His own word, and by it convert the soul. Where it is not, He can write a law in man's

heart; and however dim the light, still as salvation depends not upon the amount or extent of our knowledge, but rather its kind, and the credence we give to it, so a heathen having a law thus written in his heart—and avoiding evil, and doing what he believes to be right; avoiding the one, because he desires not to offend God in so far as he knows Him; doing the other, because he desires to please God in so far as he knows Him,—this man does what Adam did not do in paradise; he believes what he knows of God, and God is pleased; for He does not reap where He has not sown; and it is accepted from a man according to what he hath, and not according to what he hath not. The conduct of such a man is in many things what we, who are civilized, would term barbarous; yet God, who seeth the heart and judgeth accordingly, knoweth if there be existing the germ of the life of faith in Himself; and if it be faith in God of the kind described, though it be the least possible, even like a grain of mustard seed, it shall say unto the mountain of a man's iniquity, the old man, be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea and covered, and it shall be removed. Wait then, and in relation to the past, suspend thy judgment till that day comes, and perhaps you will find to your great amazement, that "more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife." Nevertheless, as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ. This was said to those who, in Paul's time, were putting their trust in the forms of religion, who were thus holding the doctrine of Balaam; they had not the thing signified by circumcision, and they trusted in the sign. They were hearers, but not doers of the law. All such are alive

without the law, although in the law; when, however, the word of God comes to them with power, sin revives, and they die. Had Adam refrained from eating the fruit of the forbidden tree, he would thereby have manifested a willing subjection to God, thus owning Him to be supreme. By eating of it, he vainly attempted to make himself the equal of God, for that was in truth the great sin; in not even one thing would he acknowledge God's superiority. The spirit which now works in the children of disobedience is precisely the same. God is not in all their thoughts. Not one act of their lives has been an act of spontaneous homage to God. They may believe, so do the devils, and tremble too. Adam, in the same sense, believed, when he sinned. Such belief, however, is but a state of mind inseparable from a god-like nature, even when darkened. There will remain the lurkings of a terror of Him we hate, because He is holy and we are wicked; and this very consciousness of the existence and claims of Jehovah, which is possessed even by them who openly deny His being, is what renders inexcusable the perversity of that spirit which defies Jehovah, when all they can know of Him is terrifying and alarming. There are various degrees of the state of unbelief, from the incarnate fiend, up to the man not far from the kingdom of God; just as there are various states of saving faith, from the dark and ignorant mind, up to the man who knows all mysteries, and has all knowledge. Still the unbelief in all is one and the same. The faith of all is alike in its nature. All are by nature the children of wrath; and to those under the gospel, the word is only profitable, when mixed with faith in them that hear it. All are dead while they live, but when the truth enters the heart, they die a second

death; sin revives, that is, they obtain the knowledge of good and evil; not in the letter, that killeth, but in the spirit. They do not any longer regard an act of obedience of any kind as meritorious towards justification; "for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." (Gal. iii. 21, 22.) "The woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth: but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that is, ye have put off the old man, forsaken father and mother, in order to cleave unto your wife—the new creature God hath formed within you, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that by that union we should bring forth fruit unto God; and whatsoever is not of faith is sin. Therefore, whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

Hast thou faith? then have it to thyself, and show thy faith by thy works. To such I now speak. Wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? See here a figure of the eternal Father offering the eternal Son upon the altar of the eternal Spirit. Thy God gave Himself for thee; say, poor sinner, wilt thou not give thyself

to Him? Oh! be followers of God, as dear children, and count it all joy when, for the trial of your faith, ye are called upon to suffer according to the will of God. Know this, that the more thou sufferest because thou believest, the more like thy Redeemer art thou in the flesh, and the more like Him shalt thou be when thou appearest in glory. Know this also, that the more unlimited thy confidence in thy God, the more exclusive thy trust in Jehovah for every thing, the stronger thy faith, all the richer and greater will be thy reward in the life that now is, and in that which is to come. To thee, O believer, wherever, and whosoever thou art, if thy seat be a throne, and thy dwelling a palace—if thou wearest a coronet, and art a prince among the people—if thou possessest lands and houses—if thou art among the princely merchants of the earth—if thou art among those who live in comparative ease and comfort, being blessed with a competence, but not rich—if thou art among the sons and daughters of toil, who still eat their bread by the sweat of their brow—if thou art among the poor, the neglected, the despised, who live in poverty, dependent upon the charity of others—if thou art a citizen of that great and blessed nation, the country of my nativity, my kinsman according to the flesh—if thou art a citizen of any of those nations of Europe, who are great, but great only in point of wickedness—if thy lot be that of an emigrant, and thou dwellest far away in the isles of the sea, or the continent of America—if thou art a bondman, a slave—if thou art an inhabiter of those parts of the earth that are yet the habitations of horrid cruelty —to thee, O believers, Jews and Greeks, bond and free, male and female, my heart overflows with the fulness of that message of love, with the gladness of those good

tidings, those good tidings of good, which thy Father and my Father, thy God and my God, thy great Redeemer and my great Redeemer, hath sent me to publish to you. Thou dost not think it a strange thing that God should raise the dead; because He has said it, thou believest. Thou dost not think it a strange thing that God should so love the world as to send His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life; He has proved that love to thee; thou knowest it, and thou believest. Does not the new creature within thyself, the true woman which God hath formed out of thine old man, does it not groan within thyself, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body; "for the earnest expectation of the creature, waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." That new creature of thine is made subject to the vanity and vexation of the present state of things, not willingly, for thy spirit is willing to do all the will of God, but thine old man, thy flesh is weak and hath subjected thy spirit in hope. But thy new creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption. On this earth, ere the consummation of all things, before the kingdom is given up to the Father and all things made subject to Him, the new creature itself shall inherit the glorious liberty of the children of God; for we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? For it pleased the Father that in His dear Son all fulness should dwell; and having made peace through the blood

of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven; and you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and unblameable, and unreproveable in His sight, if ye continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel. Now, Christ Himself is the first-fruits of them that slept, and He is become the Head of His church, which is His body. The apostles were the first who believed in salvation through the blood of the true atonement, the one offering of the Eternal Son of God. They, with the souls of them who have been beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God, are also unto God with Christ a kind of first-fruits of His creatures. They are the stars, the jewels of the Redeemer's crown. In the days of the regeneration of the world, up till the time of the restoration of all things, they were to sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel; they were to reign with Christ —overcome as He overcame, by suffering even unto death—triumph as He triumphed, contending against wicked and ungodly men; in their patience possessing their souls. They were the lights of the world during its midnight darkness; they were the stars in the spiritual firmament when both sun and moon were darkened. They shall fall from heaven too; a glory greater still than the light of suffering martyrs shall illuminate this world. Before this was to happen, "it shall come to pass, saith the Lord God, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day; behold the days come, saith the Lord God,

that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord: and they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east; they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it." (Amos viii. 9, 11, 12.) These days have come, and glory be to God in the highest, they are past, finished, and will never more return. The sun and the moon, the gospel church and the Jewish church, have been darkened. The Jewish church, like the earth, earthy, and therefore represented under the figure of a terrestrial body, the moon, it was darkened when the Sun of Righteousness first arose with healing in his wings. Nevertheless it is only darkened, for it was a figure of good things to come, and taught the world, that in an earthly state the church would be restored to the glory of a terrestrial body. The christian church—the bride of Christ—a woman clothed with the sun, superseded and darkened the moon. The moon, however, was under her feet—she stood upon the earth; but the glorious sun has also been darkened by the smoke which ascended out of the bottomless pit; and during the reign of Abaddon, the Destroyer, the souls of them which were beheaded for the testimony of Jesus alone shone as stars in the spiritual firmament. They now must fall, as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs; for "the Lord now roars out of Zion, and utters his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel." (Joel iii. 16.) Can ye not discern the signs of the times? "It shall come to pass in that day, (the year of the world's and the church's jubilee, the acceptable year of the Lord,) that the light shall not

be clear nor dark." It will not be in the midnight of Satan's delusions, neither shall it be after the final, the last resurrection; but it shall be one day, it shall be one year known to the Lord, fixed and determined, sure and certain as the unalterable counsel of Jehovah; not day, eternity, the brightness of the eternal glory which shall be revealed in the heaven of heavens; not night, the time of the thickness and the blackness of that darkness which covered the earth, when Satan, as a strong man armed, kept his palace, and his goods were at peace. But it shall come to pass at evening time, towards the latter end of the world's history, it shall be light. "Thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Zion; for the time to favour her, yea, the set time is come. When the Lord shall build up Zion he shall appear in his glory." (Psal. cii. 13, 16.) "When Christ, who is our life appears, then shall we also appear with him in glory." (Col. iii. 4.) Christ's transfiguration upon the mount was a figure of these glorious days, for Moses was there in glory; he who was in the church in the wilderness, and who truly said unto the fathers, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me: him shall ye hear in all things." (Acts iii. 22.) A prophet like unto Moses must be a sinful man. Jesus was not like Moses, for he was without sin. A prophet like unto Moses must know the Lord face to face. Jesus was not that prophet, for He was the Lord from heaven Himself. "Moses, verily, was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ as a Son over his own house, whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." (Heb. iii. 5, 6.)

The history of the Jewish church is a twofold figure of the history of the christian church. The earthly rest and the heavenly rest are both prefigured. "For we which have believed do enter into rest, and he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To-day, after so long a time; as it is said, To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. For if Jesus, that is Joshua, had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." (Heb. iv. 3, 7—9.) The three periods into which the life of Moses is divided, are figurative of parallel periods in the history of the final deliverance of the church from bondage. The corresponding time of trouble to that of the birth of Moses is the year 1803, when Napoleon Bonaparte, in the zenith of his power, threatened the invasion and overthrow of Great Britain. Lord Whitworth, the English ambassador, left Paris on the 13th of May, 1803, and the French troops entered the electorate of Hanover on the 26th of the same month. The British power, in that crisis of the world's history, acted the part of Pharaoh's daughter, and preserved and nourished the then infant church of the Redeemer, born again into the world, and struggling anew into existence. In the year 1843, in the same month of May, one section of the church, being come of age, by faith refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt. Then the power that nourished the church came into collision with the church, because, like Moses, the church was in a position it ought not to have occupied, and did things in perfect sincerity and with good motives, which it would not have done if it had not misunderstood its vocation. The church's

brother, the state, justly said, "Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me as thou killedst the Egyptian?" that is, the persecuting powers of Europe, who have given their power to the spiritual Sodom. For the Lord of the church Himself hath said, "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" (Luke xii. 14.) Nevertheless, great will be the commendation of those servants of Christ who came out and were separate on that memorable occasion; they were truly led by God, and His blessing has followed them. They ought, however, to remember, that instead of despising those who have remained behind, and speaking evil of them, which is just the spirit of those who say, "Stand by thyself, come not near to me: for I am holier than thou;" it would be more becoming the honourable position to which God has chosen them, if they would thank God that their own eyes have been opened, and rather pray earnestly unto Him that the eyes of their brethren, (of whom let them never forget they have left many behind,) may also be opened in due time, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. Moses received his first forty years training in the king's house, the next forty he dwelt in the land of Midian. When he fled from the face of Pharaoh he sat down by a well. Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters, and they came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. And the shepherds came and drove them away; but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock. The rapid increase and growth of dissent or nonconformity to the church in its union with the state, is here prefigured. The priest of Midian is a figure of the great Redeemer, and his seven daughters of the seven churches

of Christ. They began to draw water for themselves out of the wells of salvation. They were ceasing to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication, although they still held in some things the doctrine of Balaam. The shepherds of the state churches were attempting to drive them away, when God brought about the disruption of the church of Scotland, and it helped them to water their flock. The church has now entered upon her forty years' training in the land of Midian, still a stranger in a strange land, compared with the universal diffusion of the gospel yet to come. In 1848 God gave distinct warning of the coming hour of His judgment, and that year finished the actual term of the dominion of what is tyrannous and oppressive in either church or state. Yet their lives are prolonged for a season and time, until the people of the saints of the Most High are prepared to take possession of the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heavens. In that year the prophet like unto Moses has been caught up unto God and to His throne, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain saying, "Thus shalt thou say unto the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation." (Exod. xix. 3—6.) To you, O Britain, is this prophet sent; from among you has God, even thy own God, raised him up; and these are the words, the comfortable words, which he is to speak unto thy children, the true children of Israel, the first chosen

nation being but a figure of that which was to come. In that year God said unto thee, "Sanctify thyself, to-day and to-morrow and the third day; for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people." (Exod. xix. 10, 11.) Of this the prophet Hosea spake, when he said, "Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth." (Hosea vi. 1—3.) My beloved brethren, be not afraid; "For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest; and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words: which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more. But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven, whose voice then shook the earth; but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once

more, signifieth the removing of those things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire." (Heb. xii. 18—29.) Each day is a year, and this is the year of jubilee, the year 1850. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me: because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek: he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness: that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified. And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations." (Isa. lxi. 1—4.)

"Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears. Let all the nations be gathered together, and let all the people be assembled: who among them can declare this, and show us former things? let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified: or let them hear, and say, It is truth." (Isa. xliii. 8, 9.) And "it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see my glory." (Isa. lxvi. 18.) This event will take place in London in the year 1851. They shall be gathered to see the true work of all nations, they shall see the glory of the

Lord; for thus saith the Lord, "I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles." (Isa. lxvi. 19.) In that year, God shall appear in His glory to build and repair Zion. The re-building of the temple at Jerusalem is a figure of the re-building of God's spiritual house. God's appearance to lay the foundation of the true temple after the desolations of many generations, was among the churches of the Secession Synod in Scotland, in the month of September, 1772, when at a meeting of synod, the following overture was introduced, and received the sanction of the synod:—"That in regard the word of God, former acts of the church, and even reason itself, require that the widows and fatherless children of ministers should be provided for in a decent manner, with regard to the necessaries of life, the synod recommend it to the several congregations under their inspection, where any of the Lord's servants have been, or shall be called off by death, to make some provision according to their respective abilities, for their widows and children. But the synod declare that this recommendation shall be without any prejudice to their former act, requiring all their congregations to contribute for the provision of the widows and children of deceased ministers: and that where any congregation makes provision for the widow or children of its deceased minister, it shall in that case be exempt from contributing in conjunction with other congregations, according to said act." This was a recommendation truly in the spirit of a man providing for his own, especially for those of his

own house. At the same meeting of synod, the following regulations as to their public fund were passed:—

"First. That there be no public collections in time coming by the authority of this synod, but one each year, in each of their congregations, for their public fund; and that this collection be made annually on the first sabbath of April, or on the first opportunity afterwards, (when there is a vacancy on that day,) without enjoining any other extraordinary collection."

"Second. That the whole of the collection made in each congregation for that purpose be given to the synod's fund, without any deduction by the sessions, except the ordinary amount of collection for the poor."

"Third. That all the ministers of the synod be careful to have their annual collections made in their several congregations, so as to have the money brought or sent up, at one or other of the meetings of synod each year: with certification otherwise of being specially censured by the synod for their neglect."

"Fourth. That a particular state of deficients, as to these collections, be laid before the synod at each meeting, together with a state of the money in their fund."

"Fifth. That the said fund be applied not only to the ordinary purposes of training up young men for the ministry, but also for missions, and for the relief of particular congregations, so far as it can serve these purposes." (M'Kerrow's Sec. Ch. His. pp. 308-9.)

In these resolutions, the first place in the church's liberality is given to the poor; and this is the spirit of the gospel. "Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do." (Gal. ii. 10.) "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia,

even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him." (1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2.) "Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have. For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." (2 Cor. viii. 11, 12.) "For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor. v. 10.) "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on his left

hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." (Mat. xxv. 31—46.) These passages attach an eternal importance to the duty of giving relief to the poor. It is the duty "of every one of you;" and each is to do it in his individual capacity. The only motive by which a man can be lawfully constrained in the discharge of this duty, is a consideration of the grace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich. There is no other way in which we can manifest our love to Christ in this world, but by showing love to the brethren. This is the commandment of the gospel. He that loveth Christ must show his love to his God by loving the brethren. There are but two commandments, upon which hang all the law and the prophets. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself." Dost thou ask who is thy neighbour? Thy Redeemer answers thee, saying, "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which

stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow, when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him: and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise." (Luke x. 30—37.) This parable is manifold in its application; as a prediction it has been literally fulfilled. The church went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves. During the dark and dismal reign of priestcraft and superstition, the poor of Christ's house were seen, but they were avoided; and instead of visiting the widows and the fatherless in their affliction, and keeping themselves unspotted from the world, those who called themselves the church, taught men doctrines of devils, even the doctrine of Balaam. Instead of caring for the poor as the apostle Paul was forward to do, they taught that to give gifts to the church, that is, to themselves; to found and endow religious houses, which they misnamed charitable bequests, they taught that these things were sacrifices well pleasing unto God;

and that such things were truly in the spirit of selling all a man had, and giving alms, that he might have treasure in heaven. The times of the reformation brought the Levite to the place, but he only came and looked on, for even among the Scotch churches, who for a long time did collect in some measure for the relief of the poor from sabbath to sabbath, the practice is well nigh obsolete; and the pittances contributed by most congregations, even among the churches of the Secession, or what was the Secession Synod, are comparatively small; little, if any thing at all, is done by the vast majority of them. Truly the protestant church has also passed by on the other side, and it may be said with great truth, that the poor have no place in God's sanctuary. In so far as Britain is concerned, a certain Samaritan has had compassion on the poor. For many centuries the state has cared for them, and made provision for their relief; but of all the difficulties which surround the path of statesmen, there is none, at the present day, so hopelessly inexplicable as the difficulty of adjusting a poor law. At this hour the nation is threatened with an inundation of pauperism, for if matters could go on as they have been doing for a few years back, the compulsory burden of supporting the poor would crush the nation. Now, far be it from me to speak unkindly of those who are truly concerned about this matter. They have been emerging from a state of thick and gross darkness; and it was not to be expected that the confusion wrought by Bel would be removed in one or many generations. For what has been done in this matter there is commendation due, although it has not been in accordance with the will of God. In this respect we hold the doctrine of Balaam; for is it not

plain, that what a man gives to support the poor, must be given of his own free will, as an offering unto the Lord? and when each individual must give account of himself to the Lord Jesus, in regard to the manner in which he has discharged this duty, is it not very plain that to interpose any human enactments between him and his God is to cast a stumbling-block before him, causing him to eat what is sacrificed unto an idol—the will of man instead of the will of God.

The present aspect of the country, in relation to this matter, is full of instruction. God is teaching us by His providence that we are wrong; and to persist further in such a course would surely provoke Him. It is to all in the nation He speaks, not to rulers and senators only, but to the people individually, to every one of you; and dost thou not know that God hath chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love Him? "Whoso then hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth." The Scripture rule is very clearly laid down. It deals with every man, and confronts him with the claim of his Creator, as being the true foundation upon which to build the discharge of this duty. "He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord:" and it hath pleased God in mercy so to order that we should have the poor always with us, to keep in active exercise those heavenly feelings and graces of which the Lord Himself, when upon the earth, was a living and perfect example. Thou doest to thyself a great injury. Thou deprivest thyself of a source

of sweetest gratification and richest enjoyment in the life that now is, when thou neglectest the poor. Knowest thou not it is the very essence, so to speak, of the glory of the character of thy God, that He is long-suffering, and of tender mercy, compassionate and kind, whose goodness is excellency itself? Knowest thou not that He delighteth in mercy? and thinkest thou that the Scripture saith in vain, "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver?" Do be persuaded to consider seriously and immediately this solemn matter. Do thy duty according to thy ability: do it cheerfully and willingly, and of a ready mind: do it as seeing Him by faith who is invisible, but who is nevertheless the constant witness of thy thoughts and deeds. "Is this not the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him: and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh." (Isa. lviii. 6, 7.) Let each begin the work among the circle of his own friends and relations: "if any man or woman that believeth have widows, (that is, any among their relations in a state bordering upon poverty,) let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged." Those who have none to care for them, the church must take care of; congregations must supply the wants of their own, the church must relieve them that are poor indeed. And if, as in the days of the apostles, one part of the country be more burdened than another—one part of the church at large be more burdened than all the rest, then all must contribute still further to assist those who are weaker than them-

selves. Therefore the apostle saith, "I mean not that other men be eased, and you burdened; but by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance may be a supply for your want; that there may be equality: as it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack." (2 Cor. viii. 13—15.) The time is now come when all who possess riches would do well to imitate the example of the unjust steward. You must now be told that what you possess is after all not your own. Thy God gave thee all thou hast. He gave it to thee that thou mightest act to Him as a steward. Thy lands, thy houses, thy wealth, thy property of every kind, yea, if thou believest, thy soul and thy body are also thy Lord's. He hath bought thee with a price; He hath redeemed thee, but not with silver and gold; He hath given His own life a ransom for thine. Thou mayest hitherto have been living to thyself; fearing not God, neither regarding man. Thou mayest be now accused of having wasted thy Master's goods. He is calling unto thee, and He says, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward. Will you not hear His affectionate voice? He loves you. Oh! do not grieve Him. He comes not in wrath to you, whosoever thou art that believest in Him. Thou mayest have been a very negligent steward: thou mayest have spent thine all upon thyself, except what thou hast hoarded up as thou thinkest for an evil day, or what has been extorted from thee by the compulsory enactments of the national legislature: thou mayest have sinned grievously in this matter against thy God and against thy poorer brethren, and injured thyself

more than thou canst imagine, still to thee the overflowings of thy Redeemer's heart are running; and if thou wilt now just say thou lovest Him, lovest Him more than all things; and if thou wilt now show that love, by remembering the poor, who are God's peculiar care; if of thy substance thou now sittest down and calculatest what thou canst do for Christ, and doest it quickly; then like the unjust steward, whose case is recorded for thy encouragement, thou wilt have made to thyself friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; so that when ye fail ye shall be received into everlasting habitations. "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" Ah! remember the case of the rich man and Lazarus: take heed lest it be thine own. Remember him who had so much that he proposed to take down his barns and build them larger, that they might hold his goods: that night his soul was required of him. "Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth." (Isa. v. 8.) To you, the rich and the great of this great empire, the Lord now speaks:—"Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that, when he cometh

and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately." (Luke xii. 33—36.) "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily; and thy righteousness shall go before thee: the glory of the Lord shall be thy rere-ward. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity; and if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon-day: and the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in." (Isa. lviii. 8—12.)

The proclamation of Cyrus, king of Persia, concerning the rebuilding of the Temple at Jerusalem, was issued 536 years before Christ. "Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, with all them whose spirit God had raised, to go up to build the house of the Lord, which is in Jerusalem. And all they that were about them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things, besides all that was willingly offered." (Ezra i. 5, 6.) Fifteen years afterwards, in the days of Artaxerxes, by force and power the Jews were made to cease the work of the house of God at Jerusalem. On

the 22d February, 1787, precisely the same day and month on which the last French revolution began, and in the fifteenth year after what God did by the Secession Synod in Scotland, the French assembly of Notables, being convoked, began its sittings at Versailles. The results of this convocation may be regarded as the first-fruits of that whirlwind, which from thence commenced to gather its power, and ceased not to blow till it had deluged the continent with human blood. At first these events appeared to be adverse to the cause of the church of God, and obstructive to the rebuilding of the temple. We now know that these things, destructive and distressing though they were, have resulted in good to mankind. They have sapped the foundations of oppressive power, and have prepared the way, so far, for the bringing in of the latter-day glory. The temple was finished in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king; and at its dedication an hundred bullocks, two hundred lambs, and four hundred rams, were offered to God for a sin-offering for all Israel. In the sixth year after the convocation of the French Notables, on the 21st January, 1793, the French monarchy may be said to have perished. The sacrifice of Louis XVI., king of France, upon the scaffold, a victim to the ungodliness of that nation, which his progenitors had themselves nursed and encouraged by their own vices, and by their oppression, and the reign of terror which followed, were truly a bloody baptism of Jehovah's spiritual temple now progressing to completion on the earth. Fifty-eight years afterwards, or 457 years before Christ, "Ezra, a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given, went up from Babylon: and there went up of the children of Israel, and of the

priests, and the Levites, and the singers, and the porters, and the Nethinims, unto Jerusalem, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes the king, and he came to Jerusalem. For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments." (Ezra vii. 6—10.) The parallel event to this in the rebuilding of the spiritual temple, will take place in 1851, being fifty-eight years from 1793. "Then all the men of Judah and Benjamin gathered themselves together unto Jerusalem within three days: (that is, within three years of 1848:) and all the people sat in the street, in the house of God, trembling, because they had trespassed against God, and had taken strange wives of the people of the land: (that is, they had been taught the doctrine of Balaam.) Yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing. Now, therefore, let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my Lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law." That is, put away all your spiritual idols; put away every thing that separates thee from thy God; put away every doctrine; break off from every alliance, and all the offspring of every alliance which is now shown thee to be contrary to the will of thy God, and hurtful to thyself. Take heed, however, that ye do no wrong. Take heed that in the work of the great reformation which thou must now begin, that in every part of it, while ye do justly, ye love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God. The people then trembled because of this matter, and for the great rain. So now, the heavens will be opened, and the Spirit of the Lord will be outpoured in showers of refreshing rain.

The times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord are come. "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenants which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first, God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." (Acts iii. 25, 26.) "Wherefore, my beloved, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: for it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure." (Phil. ii. 12, 13.) In Ezra's time the people were many, and it being a time of much rain, and it being not the work of one day or two, it was gone about in a regular and orderly manner. So it is written by the prophet Isaiah, "Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord. For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the Lord will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rere-ward." (Isa. lii. 11, 12.) "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance." (Psalm xxxiii. 12.) "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance. In thy name shall they rejoice all the day; and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted. For thou art the glory of their strength; and in thy favour our horn shall be exalted. For the Lord is our defence; and the Holy One of Israel is our King." (Psalm lxxxix. 15—18.) Oh! Britain, Britain! what a destiny thine is! The chosen of the Lord—the nation of the Most High God. Twelve years will be given thee to prepare for dissolving the present bond of union between thy sovereign's house and the

house of thy God. From the year 1851, until the year 1863, thou shalt have time to do this great work. In the year 1848, the intimation was given to thee, of which Hezekiah's sickness in the time of Isaiah was a figure. His life was prolonged fifteen years; so thy present state must be changed in the year 1863. Then thou must commence to build up the wall of final and enduring separation between that which is defiling and the house of thy God; and this event in thy history will correspond with Nehemiah's visit to Jerusalem, twelve years after Ezra's, or 445 years before Christ. Although the connection between church and state, in the present form, must cease in 1863; nevertheless, thy God giveth thee twelve years more to complete the separation.

The people of God must put on the whole armour of God, for the enemy will oppose. Ye must have tribulation. Your faith must be tried. Ye must be purified and made white. There will be scoffers; and notwithstanding all that is happening, some will say, "Where is the promise of his coming?" It will be a time of trial to every believing soul. The trials will vary according to each case. "Be not afraid of them: remember the Lord which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your houses." (Neh. iv. 14.) That is, pray with all supplication and prayer unto your God, who is a very present help in time of trouble. "Let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thess. v. 8, 9.) "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.

Let all your things be done with charity:" (1 Cor. xvi. 13, 14:) and ever remember, that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal: it is not by might nor by power that the work will be done, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord. "Wherefore, let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him, as unto a faithful Creator." In the year 1875, the church must shine forth in all her glory and beauty in this land. The parallel year in the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem, is 433 years before Christ, when it is written, "On that day, they read in the book of Moses in the audience of the people; and therein was found written, that the Ammonite and the Moabite should not come into the congregation of God for ever; because they met not the children of Israel with bread and with water, but hired Balaam against them, that he should curse them: howbeit our God turned the curse into a blessing. Now it came to pass, when they had heard the law, that they separated from Israel all the mixed multitude." (Neh. xiii. 1—3.) So then the churches of Britain, in twenty-five years hence, will be in a position of entire separation from all that would cast a stumbling-block before them, after the manner of the teaching of Balaam. This will be the Lord's doing, and it will be wondrous in our eyes. It is further written, "Before this, Eliashib the priest, having the oversight of the chamber of the house of our God, was allied unto Tobiah: and he had prepared for him a great chamber, where aforetime they laid the meat-offerings, the frankincense, and the vessels, and the tithes of the corn, the new wine, and the oil, (which was commanded to be given to the Levites, and the singers, and the porters,) and the offerings of the priests. And I came to Jerusa-

lem, and understood of the evil that Eliashib did for Tobiah, in preparing him a chamber in the courts of the house of God. And it grieved me sore; therefore I cast forth all the household stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber. Then I commanded, and they cleansed the chambers; and thither brought I again the vessels of the house of God, with the meat-offering and the frankincense. And I perceived that the portions of the Levites had not been given them: for the Levites and the singers, that did the work, were fled every one to his field. Then contended I with the rulers, and said, Why is the house of God forsaken? And I gathered them together, and set them in their place. Then brought all Judah the tithe of the corn, and the new wine, and the oil, unto the treasuries." (Neh. xiii. 4—12.) This is an exact and faithful representation of thine own case, Great Britain. Thou hast given the civil ruler a chamber in the house of God. Through him thou distributest, not the free-will offerings of a worshipping people, but the exacted tribute, which thou callest a national tribute to religion. Thou hast many hundreds of thy curates in England, and thy ministers in Scotland, who are so ill provided for that they cannot maintain themselves comfortably, and in a degree of respectability consistent with their station. Thou hast dried up the true source from which a liberal and overflowing supply would be furnished to the treasury of the Lord, and hast substituted in its stead the doctrine of Balaam, and cast a stumbing-block in the way of the people; and the result is, that God neither blesses the giver nor the receiver in this matter. Know that in all things it is God's blessing that maketh rich, and addeth no sorrow. Do His will, and thou shalt be blest most abundantly. All who are well provided

for in this way at present need not be afraid. If they believe in God, their abundance will not be made less, when all are to be blessed. To bishops and others whose revenues are large, I would say, Fear not; if thou livest to see the end of these days, thou shalt never have cause to regret that God's house has been separated from the king's house. Nevertheless, it is the duty of each, as in God's sight, to satisfy his own spirit as to what God may justly claim from him now. Whatever change is effected in the position of such as regards their worldly circumstances, must originate in their own will. This is not a time to pull down; it is rather a time to build up. This is not a time to destroy; it is rather a time to save. This is not a time to cause unnecessary suffering to any; it is rather a time to free all from sorrow. This is not a time to cause grief; it is a time to give joy. This is the time of the restitution of all things; and whatever interests now exist, even although connected with much evil, must be approached with the utmost possible caution, so that good may be done to every one without exception, who dwells upon our island. Again I say to you who are well provided for now, Fear not; the end will be, even to you, an hundred-fold more blessed than your present state, if you be found willing to do the will of God.

To dissenting churches, who resort to questionable expedients in order to raise sufficient sums to support and maintain the house of God—to those who, while they hate the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, yet hold the doctrine of Balaam—who, instead of committing their case entirely to their Divine Master—instead of preaching the gospel and caring for the poor, having faith in God, and praying for their own daily bread—instead of

telling their hearers their duty, as to the liberality with which they should devise measures for the support and extension of the gospel, and impressing upon them their accountability to God, and to God alone in this matter —to those who build churches upon the plan of proprietorships—to those who buy and sell their sittings in the house of God, graduating their prices, so that while they only seek to give the best seat to those who can pay most for it, they are actually, although unintentionally, holding the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons; "for if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place: and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?" (James ii. 1—4,)—to those who fix a sum which each member must give for a communion ticket, though it be for the purpose avowedly of meeting the expense of providing the elements of bread and wine—to those who build churches at an expense beyond what they are able to pay, and who are burdened with debt—to all I would say, within the twelve years God has given you, use all diligence to have these blots removed, and in time to come, take heed that every man and every woman be left as free as the wind that blows to give according to their own will. Cry aloud, spare them not in the preaching of the word. Be fearless; tell the people it is God they have to do with, and not man. Tell them that God knows what He has given them—knows what they can give—knows what they ought to give—stands

over every treasury Himself, seeing what is cast in, and knows what they do give; therefore, the more secret the people can be taught and enabled to make their contributions, the better. Scotch elders at church doors, English deacons with boxes or silver plates, should not be, for it exposes what the giver gives. Upon no one point of christian duty is there more need of reformation than that of contributing for the support of the poor and the support of the gospel; and not until the scriptural plan, God's method, be fully adopted, will a blessing be vouchsafed. Thinkest thou that Christ saith in vain: "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore, when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou when thou doest thine alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth. That thine alms may be in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret will reward thee openly." (Matt. vi. 1—4.) To all the churches of Christ I would say, put away from you every remnant of the doctrine of Balaam. Cleanse the sanctuary; do thy duty to thy God, ye servants of the Most High, and hear, for your encouragement, His promise to you: "For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron: I will also make thine officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise." (Isa. lx. 17, 18.) And ye whose duty it is to give—ye whom God has privileged

in this respect, for it is no small privilege to be a fellow-worker with God—oh, hear what is written for your encouragement in the book of the Lord; and be assured, they are the true sayings of God, which you shall know to be true if you love Him and serve Him: "Return unto me and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of hosts." (Mal. iii. 7, 10—12.) Then will ye cry aloud and say, "Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth; break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel." (Isa. xliv. 23.) Then shall commence the one week, that is, the seven years in which God shall confirm the covenant with many, and in the midst of which, the year 1879, "He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." (Dan. ix. 27.) The final destruction of spiritual Sodom and Egypt will then be accomplished, and the end thereof shall be with a flood, even a flood of ungodliness; and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. (Dan. ix. 26.)

While these things are being accomplished among the nations of Europe, who have given their power to the little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots, in which were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things; even that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows, Great Britain will be undergoing the process of final purification. Her earthly government, the state, being represented under the figure of a man, because it is human; and the church being represented under the figure of a woman, because she is made out of man, and made by God, divine in her origin, divine in her nature, and like her God endless in her life. These seven days, that is seven years of purification, are prefigured in the Mosaic institute. In the 15th chapter of Leviticus, we are taught the great duty of this nation, to which the people must apply themselves in the year 1875. Then the man, that is the state, will be cleansed of his issue; then shall the unclean thing be put away from among us. We shall cease to hold the doctrine of Balaam, for the Lord spake unto Moses and to Aaron, saying, "Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When any man hath a running issue out of his flesh, because of his issue he is unclean. And this shall be his uncleanness in his issue: whether his flesh run with his issue, or his flesh be stopped from his issue, it is his uncleanness. And when he that hath an issue is cleansed of his issue, then shall he number to himself seven days for his cleansing, and wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in running water, and shall be clean. And on the eighth day he shall take to him two turtle doves, or two young pigeons, and come before the Lord

unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation and give them unto the priest. So also the woman, she shall number to herself seven days, that is seven years, and after that she shall be clean. And on the eighth day, that is the eighth year, she shall take unto her two turtles, or two young pigeons, and bring them unto the priest to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. Thus shall ye separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness: that they die not in their uncleanness when they defile my tabernacle that is among them." These things were written for thy instruction, the people of Great Britain: ye of this generation who shall call upon the name of the Lord, and upon whom the ends of the world have come. Thy sovereign, thy church, and thy state, in the year 1883, must come before the Lord, and must do so with the emblems of purity and peace. Thy kingdom must then be a kingdom of righteousness and peace. Thou must stand forth at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; that is, in the year 1883 will have finished the forty years' training of Moses, who refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Thou, as the daughter of Pharaoh, who picked up the infant church when the cruelty of thy parent, the persecuting continental power, caused it to be laid in the flags by the river's brink, in an ark of bulrushes, because it could be no longer hid. Thou who didst see the ark among the flags, and didst send thy maid to fetch it; thou who, when thou openedst the ark and saw the child when it wept, because of sorrow, and tribulation, and persecution; thou who hadst compassion on the church in the days of her trial, when the Spirit of God stood by thee, the sister of that church of which the great Redeemer is

the Aaron, the great high priest, the elder brother; thou who hast paid for the nursing of that church, and done it without grudging, because thou sawest that it was a Hebrew, that is a heavenly child; thou who didst make that church, which thou wert the instrument of saving from destruction, thy son, thine own child by adoption; know it, the time is now come when thou shalt be rewarded for thy kindness. The true Solomon's reign has come, the king of righteousness and peace, like unto Melchizedek, without beginning of days, and end of life, to whom faithful Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer and of the kings that were with him. "All ye, assemble yourselves, and hear; which among them hath declared these things? The Lord hath loved him: he will do his pleasure on Babylon, and his arm shall be on the Chaldeans. I, even I, have spoken; yea, I have called him: I have brought him, and he shall make his way prosperous. Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord God, and his Spirit, hath sent me." (Isa. xlviii. 14—16.) For "there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and

with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the coackatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Isa. xi. 1—9.) Fear not, Victoria, thou art a queen blessed of God, and highly favoured among women. Thy name was given thee by God to assure thee of the character of thy reign. Thy reign shall be a reign of victory—a reign of triumph. Bloodless shall be the conquests therein made. Thou art raised up by thy God, and thou art set upon the throne of this great empire, and thou shalt long reign in righteousness and peace. Thou, a woman, and not a man, art placed upon that throne, to declare to all that the time is come when there shall be no more curse; when woman shall cease to be in any respect the inferior of the husband. Thou art raised up by thy God, and He will make thee a pattern of godliness, an example of piety; thy praise shall be in all the churches, and the glory of thy fame unto the ends of the earth. Fear not; he of whom the prophets spake; he whom Daniel saw in vision brought near to receive a kingdom; he of whom Melchizedek was a type; he of whom Solomon was a figure; he has come, he will receive the tenth of all the spoils from Abraham; that

is, one-tenth of all the faithful seed of Abraham, ransomed by the Eternal Son of God, the only Lord of glory, the one living and true God over all, blessed for ever; he will dwell on this earth, and with him made like unto the Son of God, without father and without mother; that is, changed and new creatures: without beginning of days or end of life; that is, born of the Spirit: partakers of the divine nature, filled full of faith and of the Holy Ghost; that is, the transfigured body of the Lord Jesus Christ, the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto: whom no man hath seen, nor can see, to whom be honour and power everlasting; that is, the woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: she being with child, cried, travailing in birth, pained to be delivered; that is, the people of the Lord in these days, moved by the Spirit of the Lord, chosen in the furnace of affliction, are praying earnestly with all prayer and supplication, watching thereunto with all perseverance, giving God no rest, till He establish and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth: and she has brought forth a man-child, who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron, and he has been caught up unto God and to His throne, and to him shall be given one-tenth of the spoils of the nations; that is, one-tenth of all the holy seed from the time of Abraham till the end of the world, shall dwell with him upon this earth; and they shall not sleep, but they shall all be changed. Then shall be fulfilled the saying of the prophet Isaiah, "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall

utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." (Isa. xl. 29—31.) "For since the beginning of the world, men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, besides thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him." (Isa. lxiv. 4.) "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, the Lord liveth, which brought up, and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land." (Jer. xxiii. 5—8.) Therefore it is written in the book of the prophet Daniel, "Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days." (Dan. xii. 12.) Therefore it was said—at the time of our Lord's ascension into His heavenly glory far above all heavens, that He might fill all things—by the two men who stood by in white apparel, these being the same two who appeared in glory on the mount of transfiguration, Moses and Elias, that is, the law and the prophets; they testify that this same Jesus, that God manifest in flesh and justified in the Spirit—that is, saved, redeemed flesh and blood—shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven; that is,

the human nature of the sons of God shall be changed, and become like unto that humanity in which He, the Eternal Son, dwelt upon the earth, after He rose from the dead: incapable of pain, or sorrow, or suffering, or death itself; because the former things shall have passed away. Behold, I make all things new, saith the Lord. Therefore, the apostle saith, Christ is risen from the dead, the first-fruits: afterward they that are Christ's at His coming, when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day; that is, all men and all women who shall be alive and dwelling upon the earth—the tenth part of the holy seed of believing Abraham, whom God shall fill with His Holy Spirit, and make like unto His own Son, by the power of an endless life. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (1 John iii. 2.) Now the Lord Jesus Christ is God, and not man; He is invisible, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; and the kingdom of God cometh not with observation, but is within you. How then can we see the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God? just as the godly martyr Stephen saw it and Him, by being filled full of the Holy Ghost, and looking up full of faith steadfastly unto heaven. It is thus we shall see Him as He is; and it is thus we shall all be made like Him, for we shall see Him, He shall appear. And how shall He appear to a godless and a persecuting race? Just as He appeared unto the apostle Paul, when a persecuting Saul. The men journeying with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. The apostle Paul says he saw the Lord after

His resurrection from the dead, as one born out of due time; and he saw Him, not with the eye of his natural body, for he says himself, "At mid-day, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me." (Acts xxvi. 13.) Now, who can look upon the natural sun when it shines forth in all its strength at mid-day? and the light which the apostle saw was above that brightness. The men who journeyed with him saw no man, but they heard the voice. "And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him unto Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink." (Acts ix. 8, 9.) What is thus related, refers exclusively to the sight of the soul; the seeing of Jesus by faith through the mighty working of God's Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul charges Timothy "in the sight of Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession, that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: which in his times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see." (1 Tim. vi. 13—16.) It is plain that the apostle means that he never saw Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of God, with the bodily eye; for no man hath seen, nor can see Him. Nevertheless, the apostle saw Him, and he says he saw Him, just as Cephas, and the twelve, and the five hundred brethren saw Him. They saw Him clothed with a spiritual body, after He arose from the dead; but it was so changed that

Mary knew Him not, neither did the two disciples while He talked with them by the way journeying to Emmaus; neither did Simon Peter, nor Thomas, nor Nathaniel, nor the sons of Zebedee, nor the other two of his disciples, when after fishing a whole night and catching nothing, the morning being now come, Jesus stood on the shore; for it is written, "the disciples knew not that it was Jesus." (John xxi. 2, 4.) These occurrences were all real in themselves; they were nevertheless but figures of good things to come. The apostle Paul's conversion, he being an Hebrew of the Hebrews, and of the tribe of Benjamin, typifies that nation in which both church and state shall in the last days be constituted according to the perfect heavenly pattern. His being of the youngest tribe, indicates that the last of the holy seed upon the earth shall be converted as he was, by the appearance of a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun at mid-day. The state of that nation when this happens is also shown by the time of the day at which the apostle saw the light; it was mid-day, so, that nation shall have reached the zenith of earthly glory when the Lord from heaven, the Sun of Righteousness, shall arise upon them with healing in His wings. The three days of the apostle's blindness after the light shone, corresponds with the three years from 1848 till 1851; the former being the year in which the heavenly messenger reached maturity and received that light from heaven; and the latter the year in which the eyes of the nation being fully opened, they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost. The sight which Mary saw when she stood weeping at the sepulchre of the Lord—the two angels in white sitting the one at the head and the other at the feet where the body of Jesus had lain, represents

the church still clothed in sackcloth and mourning in Zion; but early on the third morning, that is, in the third year, the year 1850, for during this year the jubilee trumpet shall be sounded—the weeping church shall no more hang its harp upon the willow in a strange land; for the covering, the vail is removed from the face of Moses; and the Scriptures—which are the word of God, the body of Christ crucified and buried, as Christ was in the flesh, by the spiritual Sodom and Egypt—shall no longer be a dead body, but shall become spirit and life; for the books shall be opened, and another, which is the book of life, a book of remembrance, shall be written before the Lord for them that fear His name. The mighty angel with a rainbow upon his head, clothed with a cloud, however, that is, in human flesh, shall lighten the earth with his glory, and shall say to the weeping daughters of Zion, "Come, see the place where the Lord lay." "After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord." (John xxi. 1, 5—7.) This shall be the sign to thee, O captive daughter of Zion, that thy Lord is come—that thy God now dwells with thee; for it is thus written by the prophet Isaiah, "Thy children shall make haste; thy destroyers, and they that made thee waste, shall go forth of thee. Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold: all these gather themselves together, and come to thee. As I live, saith

the Lord, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all, as with an ornament, and bind them on thee as a bride doeth. For thy waste and thy desolate places, and the land of thy destruction, shall even now be too narrow by reason of the inhabitants, and they that swallowed thee up shall be far away. The children which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other, shall say again in thine ears, The place is too strait for me: give place to me that I may dwell." (Isa. xlix. 17—20.) "Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes: for thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate places to be inhabited." (Isa. liv. 2, 3.) "As soon as the disciples came to the shore, there was a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread." They were, however, first to see to the fishes which they had caught; so, "Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught." The Master's work, the Divine will, is the disciple's true meat and drink. "Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three; and for all there were so many the net was not broken. Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise." So will He do to all who now seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

In the year 1883: "in that day there shall be a root out of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign to the people: to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious." (Isa. xi. 10.) I, if I be lifted up, saith the Redeemer, will draw all men unto me. The church and state of Great Britain shall then lift up that ensign, and

shall show forth the glory of the Lord their God. The church full of the Holy Ghost shall go forth to preach the everlasting gospel unto every creature. The sword of the Spirit will be her only weapon; her faith in her Master, her only support. The state shall be a pattern from which all nations shall copy, and according to whose institutions all others will then be framed. Then will commence the forty years' journeying in the wilderness of the whole earth, of which the journeyings of the Israelites in the wilderness of Sin were a figure. In the year 1923, the whole church shall have reached the confines of the promised land, and they shall then be exposed to the last assault of the great enemy. Midway in this period, in the year 1903, the Jews shall be called, and shall be again put in full possession of the land of Palestine. After many days, in the year 1923, "Gomer and all his bands: the house of Togarmah of the north quarter and all his bands, and many people with them, they shall be visited in the latter years." These are the Russians, who have been raised to great power as a scourge to other wicked nations. Of them it is thus written: "In the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them. Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm; thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee. Thus saith the Lord, It shall also come to pass, that at the same time shall things come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought: and thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at

rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates. And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord God: every man's sword shall be against his brother. And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself: and I will be known in the eyes of many nations; and they shall know that I am the Lord." (Ezek. xxxviii. 8—11, 21—23.) Then shall be the final conquest of the whole earth, and all nations shall fear and serve the living and true God. The conquest of Palestine by the Jews under Joshua is a parallel event to this, and a figure of it. It will be accomplished by the word of God. At the end of seven years, "Joshua took the whole land according to all that the Lord said unto Moses, and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel, according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war." (Josh. xi. 23.) So in like manner, in the year 1931, the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heavens, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High. Then shall be fulfilled what has been spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets from the beginning of the world. Then shall there be other seven years of purification for the whole earth similar to that which Britain has for herself; and in the eighth year, the year 1939, shall commence the everlasting reign of the Lord's Christ; typified by the transfiguration on the mount; typified by the Lord remaining forty days on earth after He rose from the dead, each day being a year; and

typified by the peaceful reign of Solomon king of Israel. Then shall be the true feast of tabernacles. Then shall all the churches have rest and be edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, shall be multiplied. Then shall paradise be restored, and the whole earth be a garden as Eden of old, for there shall be nothing to hurt or defile in all God's holy mountain. Then cometh the end in the year 1978. When the Son shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power; then in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.

When Jesus came up out of the water after having been baptized, "lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove,

and lighting upon him: and, lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." (Mat. xiii. 16, 17; iv. 1.) Be warned then all ye who believe in Christ; your faith must be tried. It must be made manifest to yourselves that ye love God supremely, and that your only trust is in Him. Our first parents, surrounded by every thing that could be desired, did not believe, and they fell. Jesus was taken to the wilderness, and when he had fasted forty days and forty nights he was an hungered. So believers, your faith must be tried in a wilderness, and you must, like Abraham, believe against hope. If, like him, asked to sacrifice to God even that which you have obtained from Him as a reward of previous faith and confidence in Him, even that which you are assured it is His purpose to make a blessing to you still, your duty is to imitate the example of him whose children ye are, if, like Abraham, ye now forsake all, and take up your cross forthwith and follow Christ; be assured, ye will have need of patience, although ye have received such great and precious promises, to enable you to hold fast your confidence unto the end. When the tempter came to Jesus he said unto him, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." (Mat. iv. 3.) It was with the meat that perisheth with the using that he tempted our first parents, and they fell; it was with the same meat he renewed his assault upon the last Adam, the Lord from heaven; and forget not, O believers, this is still the test of thy love to God, thy trust in thy Redeemer. During our Lord's sojourn upon the earth He wrought innumerable miracles, and,

with two exceptions, they were all miracles of mercy exclusively. One of these was apparently injurious, still it was in mercy. The Gergesenes kept swine: they are figurative of those who follow occupations which are inconsistent with love to Christ; of those who count gain godliness; of those who trust in uncertain riches; of those who love money, which is the root of all evil; for they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. This spirit is alarmingly prevalent among us; it would seem as if silver and gold, houses and lands, were our gods. Oh, beware lest these become a stumbling-block unto you; lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. Remember, the Israelities of old were tried, but they murmured, and they were destroyed; for with them God was not pleased; and wherefore? because of their unbelief. The God of our salvation hath appeared. Satan and his angels must fall like lightning from heaven. But, oh, take care; do be warned to beware of covetousness; that is, of substituting the things of this world for the things of God in thine heart. Thy heart is God's; He claims it all; He will not share it with another. He says to each—son, daughter, give me thine heart. They who are wise will hear His voice, and say, Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee. Satan will be permitted to enter into thy herd of swine, if thou hast any, and they shall be destroyed. In his own destruction he will be permittted to destroy all that is destructive about you. Search thine heart; consider all thy ways; see if there be any wicked way in thee, for the time is come, that judgment must begin at

the house of God. Thou must be tried, and tried in some respect in circumstances similar to thy Saviour; thou must be tried in this world; thou must be tried in relation to the things of this world. By thy works, when thou art tried, thou must show thy faith. Jesus said unto the tempter, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." So must thou say to thine own doubts, anxieties, and fears; thou must endure as seeing Him that is invisible. Believer, dost thou believe in God? dost thou believe His word? Then He saith, "I am the high and the lofty one that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." (Isa. lvii. 15.) He who is the Creator of the ends of the earth; He who filleth all in all; He who seeth all things; He whose power is almighty and resistless; He whose heart is love itself—and that love is towards you—He hath said, I am with you; I dwell in you; ye are my temple; I will never leave you; I will never forsake you; I am with you whithersoever thou goest; I will give thee all thou canst desire; I have given thee myself, and I am all things: surely it is but a small return thou canst give to thy God, O sinner, saved by His grace; surely thy heart must be hard, thy soul must be dark, thy mind must be conformed to this world, if thou art not ready to feel, to say, and to act in full accordance with what thou sayest; "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the

stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." (Hab. iii. 17, 18.) It is the same prophet who says, that the just shall live by faith; now abideth faith, hope, and charity; faith is the rock of our joy on earth—it will be the rock of our happiness throughout eternal ages in heaven. This is the rock upon which the Redeemer's church is built, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. We must walk by faith, and not by sight. Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out; and having food and raiment, let us therewith be content. The apostle Paul charges them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. Brethren, the time is short, it remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away.

"Then the devil taketh Christ up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee; and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not

tempt the Lord thy God." (Mat. iv. 5—7.) When the enemy fails to shake thy exclusive trust in thy God, he may then strive to tempt thee to presumption. Thou art in peculiar danger in regard to this matter, seeing that thou art in these last days placed upon a pinnacle of the temple. Know this, thou hast but one duty to discharge, and that is, to act in every case, not according to what you may think most likely to accomplish God's purpose, now that He has revealed it in all its fulness and completeness, but it will be thy wisdom still to frame thy conduct and conversation in strict accordance with the practical precepts of the Bible, which are not, and never can be superseded. Think not that because thou now knowest what shall take place on earth until the end of time, that therefore thy moral accountability, thy freedom of action, is in any way interfered with. Rather know, that the light that now shines will be thy ruin, if thou in any way swervest from the strait and narrow path of christian duty. It will be to thy greater condemnation, O man, whosoever thou art, that because thou knowest so much of the future, thou foldest thine hands, and takest thine ease, saying, thou canst do nothing. It will be thy sin, O man, whosoever thou art, that wilt attempt as thou thinkest to help to fulfil the purpose of God, if thou resortest to means that are unscriptural. The people of God must be stirred up, and must use all diligence to make their own calling and election sure. They will show their faith in God, and their love to Him, by living godly, righteous, and sober lives. But if they place themselves in circumstances of peril; if they go in the way of trouble; if they seek persecution: to such there is no promise of support and protection. Take heed that none of you suffer for evil-

doing; but rather, if it be the will of God, that you must needs suffer, then let it be wholly according to the will of God, and by all means maintain a conscience void of offence towards God and man. It is a perilous time, though it be also a joyous time. Many shall fall, but they shall rise again. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried. God will now dwell with men, but His people must also dwell in Him; and this they can only do when they exercise every faculty of mind and energy of body which they possess, in making provision for their spiritual and temporal wants. They who say they trust in God, and yet do not put forth all their energy for themselves, are presumptuous, and are in the snare of the wicked one, and would do well to remember it is written, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Nevertheless, exertion without faith will be fruitless; by faith ye stand, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. In short, the only safe state in which to live, is one of unlimited, undivided, and exclusive trust in God; at the same time uniting with that, and never separating from it, the most laborious, untiring, and persevering exertions, day by day, of body and mind. Against such there shall be no condemnation, and they shall see and dwell in that land which is not now afar off. Thus shall we cease to hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication; and thus shall we also cease to hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate, saith the Lord.

Ver. 16, 17. "Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Blessed be thy glorious name, Jehovah of hosts, all thou askest from us is that we change our thoughts and our practice towards thee. Thou knowest, O Lord, our sins and our shortcomings. Thou sayest, "Hear, O heavens; and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that are corrupters! They have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek ye judgment; relieve the oppressed; judge the fatherless; plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: (that is, the sword of God's Spirit:) for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." (Isa. i. 2—6, 16—20.) Wherefore hear the word of the Lord, ye who have made lies your refuge, and have hid yourselves under falsehood. "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried

stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet; and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding-place." (Isa. xxviii. 16, 17.) "Seek ye the Lord, while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him: and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isa. lv. 6—9.) Repent ye, repent ye; again I say, Oh, hear all to whom the hearing ear is given: repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand; yea, it is at the very door. Bring forth fruits meet for repentance, and think not to say within yourselves, We are members of a christian community; we are citizens of the chosen nation; we live among a god-fearing people; for I say unto you, that now the axe is laid unto the root of the trees; therefore, every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. God's judgments are in the earth, and when they are so, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. Let favour be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord. Thinkest thou that those who have recently suffered when the judgments of the Lord were in the earth, were sinners above all others? I tell thee, nay, and except ye repent, and that quickly, ye shall all likewise perish; for the day of the vengeance of

the great God Almighty and our King is near. Wilt thou contend with thy maker, thou worm of the earth? Wilt thou stretch out thine hand against God, and strengthen thyself against the Almighty? Wilt thou run upon Him, even upon His neck, even upon the thick bosses of His bucklers? Whosoever falleth upon that stone shall be broken; but upon whomsoever it shall fall it will grind him to powder. Oh, repent, repent! "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain. In that day the Lord, with his sore, and great, and strong sword, shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea." (Isa. xxvi. 20, 21, xxvii. 1.) He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Ver. 17. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."

To all that repent and believe, the Lord will make Himself known in another way than He does unto the world. They shall receive from the Lord the gift of the Spirit, the promise of the Father. They will receive a white stone, the assurance of being justified in God's sight; and shall have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. In the stone there shall be a new name written; an excerpt, so to speak, of what is written in the Lamb's book of life. The Holy Spirit

shall bear witness in their spirit that they are heirs of heaven, and joint heirs with Christ. They will receive God's seal, the seal of the Divine Spirit. Their new name is their new creature born from above, and this no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it. We have an altar, and that altar is the Eternal Spirit, through whom the Son of God offered Himself without spot unto God for us. Of this altar they have no right to eat, who serve the tabernacle. They can neither bestow nor withhold the heavenly gift. The Spirit comes direct to each soul of each believer, and it is a great error when man ventures in the least degree to interpose his mediation. The Spirit passes not through the soul of one man to another man. Oh, how can it be so, when He is that one Spirit who fills all believers and all things? That is a great delusion which teaches that the work of God's Spirit can be limited, regulated, or in any measure constrained by the will of man. Dost thou not see, whosoever thou art that claimest for thyself such a prerogative, that thou art exalting thyself above all that is called God? Thy God leaves thee free; thy God does not in any, even the least degree, so deal with thee as to control thy will against thy will; thy God who knows thy heart, who can, if it please Him, suspend the workings of thy mind; thy God who is thy Creator, and in whom thou livest, and movest, and hast thy being; hear it, O vain man, the great God leaves thee free to choose thine own way. But thou the creature wilt not leave thy fellow-creatures free; thou who knowest not the heart of even one man, and who seemingly dost not know too much of thine own, presumest to prescribe and to do to thy fellow-man what God in His wisdom has seen meet not to do to

thyself or any of His intelligent offspring. Hadst thou stopped here, thy impiety would have been great, and, although a sin of ignorance, thou wouldst have great cause for sorrow, because of having transgressed thyself, and by that transgression have deadened in others the sense of personal accountability to God, which, because of sin, is already weak enough in every human heart, and should have rather been stirred up by thy faithful remonstrances and earnest entreaties unto all, that they would each for himself pray God, and look to heaven alone, by faith in Christ, for the gift of the Holy Spirit. But thou hast transgressed beyond all human conception. Thou the creature of a day—thou a pigmy of the earth—thou hast dared even to cherish the wicked thought, that thou couldst command Him whose majesty is higher than the highest heavens. Thou who never wast permitted to enter the holiest of all; thou who knowest not the counsel of the Eternal Three in One regarding thyself for the next moment of thy life; thou who, if thou wert full of the Holy Ghost thyself, wouldst find thy only happiness in perpetual adoration and worship of Him, of whom, blessed be His name, we shall be always learning, and never fully taught; thou, a master in Israel, who oughtest to have known better, thou hast done more than put thy hand to the ark of Jehovah, for which instant death was inflicted; thou hast done more than offer strange fire before the Lord, for which Korah and his company were destroyed; thou hast done more than even intrude thyself into the holiest of all, into which none but the high priest dared to enter, and that but once a-year, in a manner, and in the performance of rites which solemnly teach how sacred, how inapproachably holy, holy, holy, is the

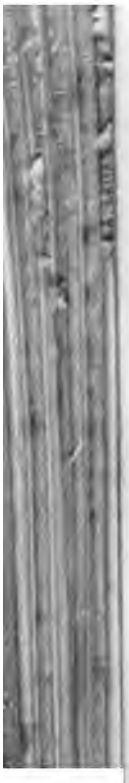
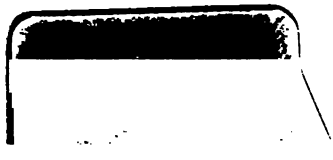
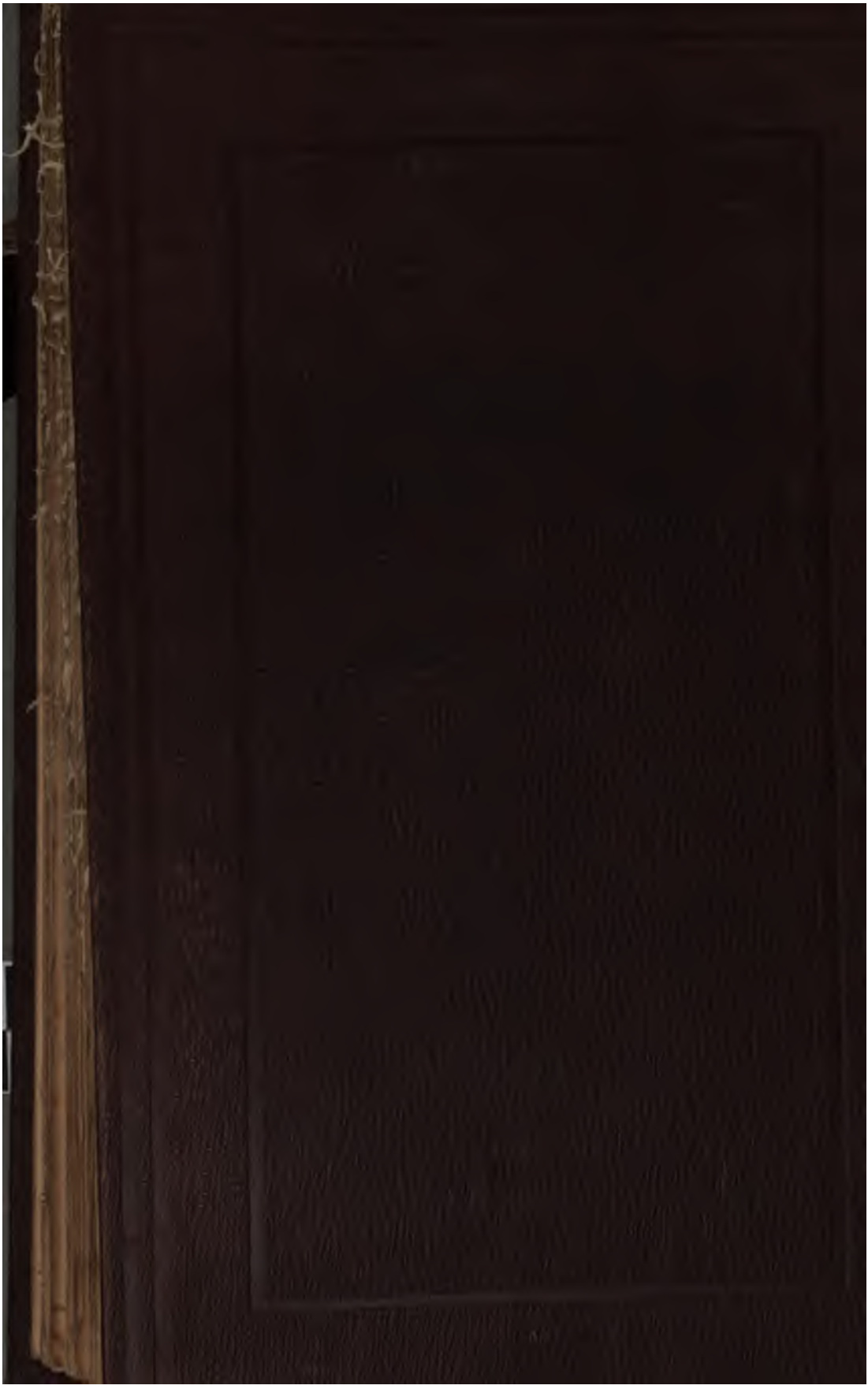
Lord of hosts. Ah! poor, poor man, whosoever thou art, that hast arrogated to thyself, by what thou callest apostolical succession, the privilege, the prerogative of bestowing God's Spirit when thou sprinklest with water—of consecrating a priest or a minister when thou layest on thy human hands; thou who wouldst not be satisfied with having a key to open heaven's door to as many as thou pleasest to admit, and who art not content when thou exercisest, as thou vainly imaginest, thy sacerdotal powers in bestowing divine unction upon those who are presented for what thou callest holy orders; thou who, if thou wouldst stop even here, wouldst not have such a full cup of iniquity—thou who wilt dare to say, that any whom thou dost not baptize with water, any whom thou dost not set apart to the sacred office of the holy ministry, shall not be saved, and should not preach the everlasting gospel of the everlasting God; thou who hast exalted thyself to a height of practical impiety so great that, didst thou but know, the angels that excel in strength stand aghast, appalled at the awful blasphemy. I tremble while I write. I tremble lest thou wilt still refuse to hear thy God—lest thou wilt still place thyself above thy God, and set thy heart above His throne, and make, if thou couldst, His will subservient to thy will. What can be thy aim? Thy sin cannot be described in language. If a wilful sin, and wilfully persisted in, it is that awful state from which there is no deliverance either in this life or in that which is to come. But it may, after all, be a sin of ignorance. It may be a sin for which thou wilt now be grieved, and of which thou wilt now repent. If thou dost, thou shalt be forgiven, and thou shalt then thyself receive the white stone, and in the stone a new

name written, which no man shall know save thyself; and then thou wilt be persuaded that thine was a perilous case, and that thy God was merciful towards thee, in passing by thine iniquity, for it is great; and above all, in bestowing upon thee the gift of that very Spirit whom thou hadst so dishonoured. Oh! repent, repent! for surely God waiteth to be gracious unto thee; and when thou art converted, tell thy brethren that there is no other name given among men whereby we must be saved, but the name of Jesus Christ; that there is but one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; and that He is able to save to the very uttermost all who come unto God by Him, seeing that He ever liveth to make intercession for them. That there is but one Spirit, and that He is the promise and the gift of the Father; and that no man can receive that Spirit through another man, but that every man must ask for himself; and he that asketh receiveth; he that seeketh findeth; to him that knocketh the door is opened: for if ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. Hitherto, saith the Lord—and it is a just reproach to all His people without exception; oh! be rebuked, be reproved, be persuaded, be encouraged—hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. For if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. Pray each for himself; pray one for another; and thus in answer to the effectual fervent prayer of even one righteous man, blessings innumerable may be outpoured; for he prays, not according to his

own will, but his spirit always saith, even in anguish and sorrow, Father, not my will, but thine be done.

But it is said of Cyrus, who did the Lord's pleasure upon ancient Babylon, that "for Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me." (Isa. xlv. 4.) Cyrus was a figure of the future deliverer, just as Babylon was a figure of the future Babylon; and God has also called by his name in Scripture his servant in these last days, and the name he has given him is one descriptive of his work, so that this verse may with propriety be regarded as having a particular, as well as a general interpretation. His name none can know but he himself; but being descriptive of his work, the result of that work is foretold by the prophet Isaiah. It is a glorious thought: it will be the theme of eternal praise, of endless hallelujahs to the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, for He alone is God, and besides Him there is no God. "And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel; only let us be called by thy name." (Isa. iv. 1.) The seven churches, all the churches of the Redeemer, will hear their master's voice, will put away their idols and their fornication. The prayer of the Lord of glory will be heard, and all His churches shall be one. They shall trust in Him according to His promise. Their ears shall be unstopped, their eyes shall be opened, their hearts shall understand, and they shall be made willing in the day of their Redeemer's power. They shall desire to be called by the name of him whom God sends; that is, his name when interpreted being expressive of what God desires to be done by His people, they, all the

churches, shall be willing to do God's will, and then they shall know of the doctrine whether it be His. It is to God, and to God alone, that every eye must look; for if even Gabriel came from heaven, still he would be but the sent of God. Take heed. Oh! be warned; do be entreated; cease from man, from any man, although the greatest ever born of woman: still, worship him not; he is but, after all, thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren who keep the sayings of this book. Worship God—worship thy Creator. Yield not thy will to the will of any man. Submit not thy faith, either in its matter or manner, to any man; human help will fail thee. Each man, although full of the Holy Ghost, has nothing to spare for another. Each needs all he possesses for himself, and he must ever be returning to the great fountain of all life for fresh supplies. Judge all things for thyself. Thy God asks an enlightened obedience. Thy God seeks a faith grounded in love, but also a faith according to knowledge. Again, I say, take heed lest ye commit the error of the inspired apostle, and fall down to worship a creature like thyself. There is danger that in the ecstacy of thy joy, O believing souls! —there is peril that in the greatness of what God is now to do by the instrumentality of sanctified humanity—there is reason to cause uneasy apprehensions, lest in the inward emotions of your grateful hearts you give that honour to the creature which is thy Creator's due. Grieve not the spirit of him that loves his God so greatly, that he would be in anguish if any, who also love that Lord, should think of him above themselves, or in the remotest manner give to him the shadow of a tribute for what is done; for it is all the doing of the Lord. And if it would be in accordance with the will of that

Lord, his servant would desire to remain under even a darker cloud than that with which a human body covers a heavenly spirit; he would, if it were possible, live in obscurity, unknown and unknowing, except as a brother rejoicing with his brethren in those marvellous works which our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ will now perform for His body—the christian church. Again, I say—for the inspired apostle committed the error twice, and even Paul himself gloried in the man who was caught up to the third heaven and into paradise, and who heard unspeakable words—glory ye in the Lord! and give that man his highest enjoyment, by worshipping and praising God alone, who is over all, and in all, and upon you all, blessed for evermore.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.